



**Window
on
Jordan**

Our multi-purpose banknotes!

By Uham Sadeq
Star Staff Writer

THERE ARE many bad habits in society, but writing on banknotes is not the first one to spring to mind. But a problem it is!

"Following tradition, my fiancé gave me a JD 10 banknote as an 'advance dowry'." I wrote the date, and our initials on it to keep as a souvenir of this happy occasion," said Laila, now a mother of two. Well, that incident may be understandable—a reasonable excuse. Yet she laughed, adding that one day when she was out shopping and discovered she was out of money, she had to spend her lucky

banknote.

Some people regard writing on banknotes as a matter of poor morals; some would say it is no more than a habit—they write on clothes, books (students) or sometimes even the banknotes themselves. Does it fulfill some kind of need to have something for their inner feelings or is it a sign of a person's gists, a kind of disease. "I really don't know why I sometimes write on banknotes. When I get my salary I usually write all my debts on paper and put a number on the first banknote so as not to forget," said Ahmed, a teacher.

It is common to see torn banknotes and very

orn-out ones, but as long as the number and the name of His Majesty the King are clear they are still currency. However, some shops do reject such banknotes.

A money changer said that he has received many banknotes with telephone numbers, names and even pictures of poetry or drawings carved on them, and he can't do anything but accept them.

Currency, thus, continues to circulate from one person to another regardless of the state of the banknote and no matter what's written on it. Some people

Continued on page 2



The Star

**Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly**

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

● **Jamais loi de la presse
aussi dure**

page 10

● **Toujours Fayçal
la passionaria**

page 11

- **Poverty on increase** page 3
- **Money laundering** page 5
- **Pagan worship** page 6
- **Power of Arab art** page 8
- **Sinking catfish** page 14

AMMAN, 25 JUNE — 1 JULY 1998, VOLUME 9, NUMBER 3, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Israeli Jerusalem plan signals final death knell to peace process

By Star Staff Writer and
combined news agencies

THE FINAL death knell has sounded. That is what everybody is saying this week about the peace process. The expansion of Jerusalem's municipal borders by the Israeli government has created uproar both in the region and internationally. Leaders and states see the Israeli Prime Minister's action to expand the administrative reach of the Jerusalem Municipality as a gross violation of international Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Europe and the United States are particularly livid about the Israeli plan. Jordan criticized the move strongly.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Jawad Al Anani describes the plan as "null and void," adding that it is "anti-peace" and will hinder the whole peace process. Dr. Anani says that "these measures form an open aggression against the Palestinian Occupied Territories."

Jordan's Lower House of parliament has strongly condemned Israeli plans to expand its authority over Jerusalem.

In a statement released Tuesday, legislators said that they categorically and strongly reject and condemn Israeli attempts to target the Arab and Muslim identity of Jerusalem.

They added, "we urge all Arab and Muslim nations to stand firmly in the face of this flagrant aggression against their rights and their holy shrines."

Bibi Netanyahu will not be deterred, however. In characteristic fashion, he scoffed at US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's criticism of the plan to redraw Jerusalem's boundaries as "ridiculous." But the United States leadership is dismayed, believing that the plan could doom sensitive US efforts to restart peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, perhaps deal the final blow in the five-year-old peace process.

Earlier this week, the spokesman for the US State Department, James Rubin,



Palestinians sit on top of the rubble of a house in Jerusalem that was bulldozed by the Israelis, Monday

described the plan as a "provocative" step that "undermines any sense of trust and confidence between the parties. Rubin said it was 'unfathomable' to the US that Israel would push the plan through now 'given the sensitivity of the current moment.'"

However, Netanyahu quickly seized the moment, despite the fact that US criticism mellowed later in the week. In a somewhat placatory mood he said that the Israeli blue-print for Jerusalem is only a matter of administrative convenience that is devoid of political intent.

He said, "Those who make a fuss over the plan are the ones who undermine the peace process. The details have no political significance."

But such comments are not going down well with others including many Israelis. Netanyahu's apparent willingness to hold a referendum on the future of the West Bank, as a peace offering, is merely seen as a ploy to divert attention from Israel's real intentions.

Palestinian leaders condemned the plan, calling it a violation of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords and an attempt to influence future negotiations on the City's status.

Palestinian leader Yasser

Arafat urged the Clinton administration to step up pressure on Israel and go public with its plan for an Israeli troop withdrawal in the West Bank, the chief Palestinian negotiator said.

The appeal was contained in a letter by Arafat to Albright, said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

Arafat reminded Albright that a phone call last month, she assured him that her negotiations with Netanyahu on a withdrawal would be completed within two weeks, Erekat said.

In his letter, Arafat rejected any weakening in the US proposal which demands Israel withdraw from 13 percent of the remaining occupied territories.

"He [Arafat] said that he went all the way with her ideas in meetings here and there, and now it is time for the American administration to introduce its ideas and proposals publicly and officially, and it is time to tell Netanyahu that enough is enough," Erekat said.

"This burns the bridges to the permanent status negotiations," added Erekat. "It's a very, very grave decision."

Also conveying the frustration of the Palestinian people is Faisal Al Hussein, the man in charge of the Jerusalem portfolio in the PNA.

"Israel's decision to extend the boundaries of Jerusalem is tantamount to declaring war on the Palestinians," he said.

At the heart of the plan is the significant expansion of the city's boundaries to the west and south to include a number of overwhelmingly Jewish settlements.

The plan expands the city's tax base and increases the Jewish majority, which now stands at 70 percent of the population of 620,000. These towns include upper Moza, Beit Zait and Mevasser Zion, a relatively affluent community that has fought the proposed annexation.

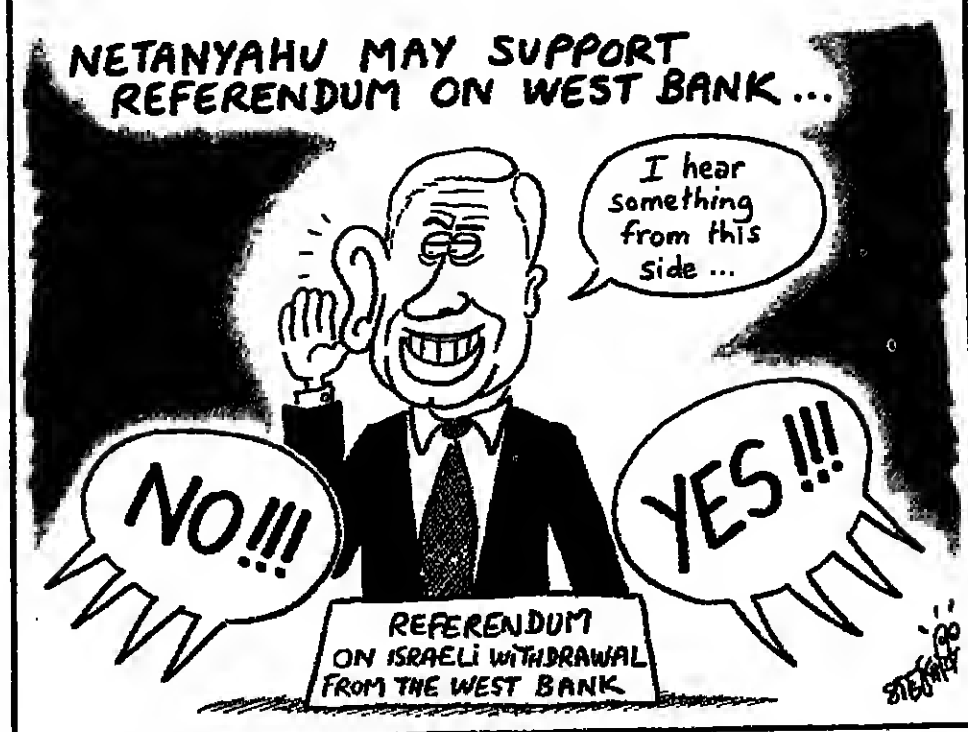
The blueprint put forward by the Israelis calls for the construction of 142,000 Jewish homes and the implementation of programs to attract Jews to Jerusalem.

What is deeply worrying is the fact that the plan will give the City administrative powers over the Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

More than 150,000 Israelis inhabit 140 settlements in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

However, Arabs strongly feel that the act of the Israeli government would only strengthen the grip of the Israelis over the Holy City.

Continued on page 2



Jordanians speak out against double standards on censorship

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer

FOR SOBHE Abu Muthfar, the government should be the last to talk about defending public morals. Hold on, the 64-year-old man has his reasons. His second-hand clothes store shares a wall with one of the oldest movie houses in Safat Al Sai that shows titillating "behind the scenes" sex movies.

Continued on page 2

"This movie house promotes immorality by showing uncensored films—why does the government only want to go hard on the press for showing a movie star wearing a bikini while this cinema has been showing this kind of filth for ages," said Abu Muthfar, who is one of a small band of Jordanians who have daily a habit of digesting the morning newspapers, and sometimes the week-

lies, along with a cup of coffee. No wonder so many viewers stand outside the cinema house shamelessly looking at their previews. It can safely be argued that these people far exceed those who glance at the tabloid headlines at the kiosk nearby.

Standing for a few minutes near that movie house, which is one of many in Amman, and other cities in the Kingdom, many male passersby could be seen running their eyes over the pictures of semi-naked women.

For students at the University of Jordan (UJ), the press is cherished, despite the fact that it may not be the daily diet of many graduates.

"Who will carry our causes if the press has gone," cried an emotional Mona Jamal, a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences at UJ. "Yes, the press made mistakes but we should not put all newspapers in one basket. And since there is an existing law why do we need a new one?"

Mona made a valid point. Up till now the government has shied away from providing a convincing answer.

Officials claim that the current 1993 Press and Publica-

Iraq looks to the West to ease sanctions

By Star Staff Writer

IRAQ IS currently intensifying efforts to get international community support in case the UN sanctions imposed on her since the second Gulf war in 1991.

Recently, the Iraqi deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz, expressed hope that these sanctions would come to an end by October.

Meeting the Spanish foreign minister in Madrid, Aziz urged the Southern European countries to back Iraq in lifting the sanctions, after the UN Committee to destroy Iraqi mass destruction weapons submits its new report to the Security Council.

Iraq also hopes to restore economic ties with Spain and enhance bilateral cultural cooperation between the two countries. Later, an Iraqi daily reported that Iraq will demand that Germany re-open its embassy in the country after an eight-year closure.

To achieve this goal, a high level Iraqi delegation is planning a visit to Germany soon to discuss ways of re-establishing ties with Iraq. The Iraqi delegation is expected to invite German officials to visit Iraq and see on the ground the negative effects of the UN sanctions. The same daily earlier disclosed that a 26 member German business delegation will travel to Baghdad next month to discuss ways of bolstering economic and trade ties between the two sides.

However, it seems that Iraq's future will remain undecided, as will the decision in case sanctions. The UN weapons inspectors have uncovered evidence that Iraq put deadly UN nerve gas into missile warheads before the 1991 Gulf War. Inspectors claim this contradicts assurances given by Iraq that this is not the case.

The new evidence is contained in a confidential US Army Laboratory analysis (completed in June) of warhead fragments recorded by UN inspectors from a destination pit at Taji, Iraq in March.

The new committee also claimed that its findings suggest a continued effort by Iraq to conceal weapons of mass destruction. However, Iraqi officials repeated their denials regarding the UN program in a meeting held recently with Richard Butler, executive chairman of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) which is responsible for finding and destroying prohibited weapons in Iraq.

Butler informed the Security Council last week about the preliminary results of the chemical analysis on excavated

Continued on page 2

Iranian women lead new revolution

By Robin Wright

TEHRAN, Iran—As dawn breaks over the towering Elborz Mountains, Elahieh Adeli throws a baggy coat over her sweats, covers her hobbled hair and runs to an outdoor lot to engage in what, for an Iranian woman, is a blatantly defiant act. She plays basketball with her husband and his pals.

For 15 years, Simin Ekrami has worked artistic magic with chunks of wood, clay and plaster of Paris. But lately the barefoot, denim-clad sculptor has worked on what was once unthinkable in the Islamic republic: uncovered and anatomically correct figures of women. Although she ducks descriptions, her husband openly calls them nudes.

During Iran's 1979 revolution, Mahboobeh Abbas-Gholizadeh campaigned hard

against the monarchy, and she later studied at one of the famed seminaries in the city of Qom. Now the editor of the women's intellectual magazine *Farzaneh*—a divorced mother of two girls who smokes Marlboros and likes mountain climbing—she writes editorials challenging the same revolution.

She says it hasn't done enough for women.

A revolution has erupted within Iran's revolution. Its pace is slower. It rarely speaks with a single voice. And it still faces obstacles so formidable that, by comparison, ending 2,500 years of monarchy looks almost easy.

But the passions that have emerged from disparate corners of Iranian society to inspire a vibrant women's movement are just as deep as those of 1979.

"Ironically, the (1979) revolution appears to have given women a keener

sense of their rights, created among them a sense of community and turned them into an informal constituency or pressure group," said Haleh Esfandiari of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, author of "Reconstructed Lives: Women and Iran's Islamic Revolution."

"In Iran today, women are regarded with awe because of the combative attitude they adopted toward the state's attempts to interfere in their private and public lives."

That combative spirit is now visible in virtually every aspect of Iranian life. From the 84 women's basketball teams in five Tehran leagues to the unprecedented 200 women who ran in 1996 elections for the 270-seat parliament, from the women's groups now on the Internet to new laws improving women's rights in divorce, employment, dowries and child custody.

Iran's movement, however, differs from women's liberation in the West. It often

works from within Islam. The majority of women are adapting traditions and reinterpreting Kuranic verse rather than rejecting either outright.

"What I say about women's rights is based on what I studied of religious law and logic," said Abbas-Gholizadeh, the editor. "And I can tell you from knowing the Koran and 'hadith' (Islamic traditions) that whatever the clerics are doing is not what is written in the Koran. It is only their interpretation—their male and sometimes chauvinist interpretation."

"In the Koran, it is written that men and women are equal before God. And those who are better are better because they are good Muslims, not because they are men or women."

Putting their own imprint on the way Islam is applied has led women to become a defining force in politics here. The over-

Continued on page 2



**World
Report**

05.1.1347

Our multi-purpose banknotes!

Continued from page 1

ple even naively hope that some day their "personalized" banknote will continue to change hands and eventually come back to them.

This speaks volumes about people's ethics, psyches and convictions. "It is difficult to judge people's behavior or alter their practices when they don't think they are doing anything wrong," said a money changer.

But many bankers stress that writing on banknotes is absurd and is a big loss to the country's economy as the government is obliged to withdraw worn-out or distorted banknotes from circulation and issue new ones more often.

A former banker suggests that the best solution would be

to "use coins which last longer and can't be distorted torn or damaged." But he elaborates that such a proposal is not practical. "Imagine how much change you would have in your pocket if you gave a vendor a banknote of JD 10 and got the change in coins," he added.

Also, some money dealers prefer to use banknotes, not coins. "In many cases, when I give a taxi driver a dinar coin he frowns and asks for a banknote," said Jamal, unable to see the problem. Its value is the same but many are reluctant to accept them.

So, it is a matter of conduct, morals or merely a bad habit to write on banknotes and use them for purposes other than their basic function? Aware-

ness of this widespread phenomenon and its greater impact could help put a stop to it. Abdel Salam Saudi, a money changer pointed out. "Of course this is a bad habit, and I have suggested that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) introduce a plastic banknote that can't easily be torn or distorted as is the case now. This type of currency is already in circulation in Australia, Brunei and Thailand."

However, higher cost could hinder the implementation of this proposal, which is currently being studied by the CBJ. It is estimated that though safer, more effective and practical, the plastic banknote could cost up to four times more than the current currency system.

Jordanians speak out against double standards on censorship

Continued from page 1

tions Law is full of gaps which the new draft is trying to fill. It is believed that in the past four years the government has lost 90 percent of lawsuits against the press. However while it has failed to jail any journalist by a court order, the government did routinely take them into custody.

But it seems that the government will now take the law into its own hands, since the draft has authorized the director of the Press and Publication Dept. to ask the court to suspend any paper by using any law aside from the press law to

punish any journalist. This could mean that the "violation" could be on the receiving end of a very harsh sentence.

What worries journalists is that they fear that the new draft leaves it to the discretion of the PPD Director. If he sees fit to punish journalists under the State Security Law, for example, then he could do so.

"The [draft] law if passed will bring us back to point zero," said Mo'ayad, a law student at UJ. He sees the draft in terms of a rich school of architecture—one had painting, and you demolish the whole house."

With taxi drivers it's another story. Some don't even pay attention to local news. Most don't read papers or listen to the local radio, but many switch to the foreign broadcasts on the FM service.

"There is nothing interesting about the local media," said Imad, a taxi driver. "They are very careful and do not write or transmit all the news about Jordan." Printing down to his cab

radio, which was blasting away on one of the foreign stations that broadcasts in Arabic, he exclaimed, "Just listen to that, do we have such creativity?"

The Jordan Human Rights Society also comment. "The financial penalties imposed on journalists are more severe than those imposed on drug traffickers."

In a statement released last week the organization said the draft contradicts the Constitution, National Charter and the International Human Rights Convention which Jordan signed.

But what has forced the government to step into such a swamp? One ordinary citizen provided an answer. "The press, particularly the weeklies, have covered the kind of news that teases the government," said Majid Saleh, an engineer who only reads the weekly press. As an example he cited Mossad's failure to assassinate Khalid Masha'al, [Hamas political head]. Even two days

after the event official spokesmen would only refer to the incident as a "quarrel between Masha'al and two foreigners." Saleh summed it up: "The local press got the truth though the foreign press, which had run full coverage of the incident that shocked the world."

However, it should be noted that the number of readers of the weekly press, the main target of the draft, is considered very small. Of about 18 weeklies published in the country only eight exceed sales of 2000 copies per week.

These weeklies already survived a precarious financial situation without facing another blow from the proposed draft law. Last January the High Court of Justice ruled against another harsh temporary press law—the reason for the closure of 13 weeklies. The remaining papers simply cannot not survive another severe press law but it is difficult to see what they can do. Their fate seems already sealed.

Iranian women lead new revolution

Continued from page 1

whelming turnout and unity of the women's vote were one of the factors behind the May 1997 electoral victory of Iran's President Mohammad Khatami, who campaigned on a platform of reform, in the biggest election upset since the 1979 revolution.

A month later, one of Khatami's early appointments was a woman vice president. Today, almost a third of government employees are women. And the president's office and most ministries and government offices now have departments for women's affairs headed and staffed, for the most part, by women.

During Women's Week last October, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the conservative supreme leader who has the last word on all issues, told a stadium full of women that "a blind imitation of Western women" would be "noxious." Yet even he demanded "greater participation of women in social and political affairs."

"In the end," said Esfandiari of the Woodrow Wilson Center, "the regime itself has been forced to acknowledge it cannot exclude women from public life."

Women have not yet achieved the same rank as some did under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the late monarch. But what distinguishes the current women's movement from activism during the shah's era are the types and numbers of activists. Many leading advocates today are not Westernized or upper-class elites but from the masses of women from traditional families, rural areas and even clerical circles.

Dozens of the 200 women who ran in the 1996 election came from rural areas rarely before involved in politics; the number of women who sit in the Majlis, the parliament, has more than tripled since the revolution, to 14.

Marzieh Sadighi, 41, is one of the new politicians. Raised in a traditional family and married at 13, she nevertheless went on to college and graduate school in engineering. She served as deputy minister of housing before both she and her husband, Gholam Reza Shirazian, decided to run for parliament from Mashad in 1996.

Both won, but she got more

votes. And she is quite an independent thinker. "Sometimes we have real quarrels over the pros and cons of proposed laws," she said with a laugh.

Although Sadighi is a member of parliament's conservative majority, her agenda is shaped by the issue of women's rights. She supports the idea behind a controversial new bill mandating separate medical services based on gender, but questions it out of concern that there are not enough women doctors, nurses and medical technicians to provide equal care for women.

On the other hand, "it will provide important employment opportunities for women," she added.

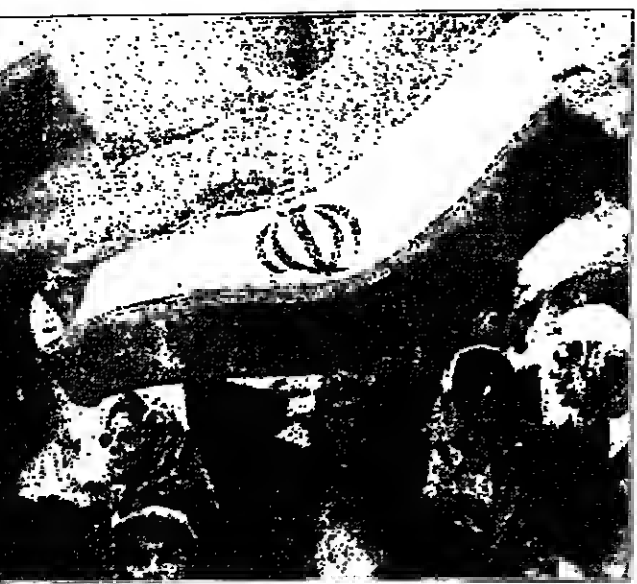
Sadighi opposes a second controversial bill banning the publishing of pictures showing women without proper "hejab," or modest Islamic dress.

"The idea is to present women based on their abilities and knowledge, not their bodies—an idea I support," she said. "But we have enough regulations already to deal with this issue."

Revolutionary law imposes daunting restrictions on women, from cumbersome hejab to stipulations that a wife can't leave the country without written permission from her husband. Among the most offensive to women here is the fact their testimony in court carries only half the weight of a man's word.

To outsiders, Iranian law also seems riddled with contradictions. Women must ride on the back of buses but can be squashed in between men in public taxis. Women and men can't date in public but they can sit together in darkened theaters—as increasing numbers do.

At the same time—and unlike their counterparts in the nearby pro-West sheikdoms of the Gulf—Iranian women can vote (beginning at age 15,



Iranian women celebrating World Cup victory

drive, go to university with men and work alongside them in offices or employ them in women-owned businesses. Iran's first police academy for women was inaugurated 14 June.

More than 40 percent of the university population is female, government figures show—a far higher percentage than during the shah's era.

Women in government are making deeper inroads by tackling the most controversial laws—and in the process blending modernism with religion and tradition.

The Iranian version of dowry, the "mehr," is still a part of most marriages. But a recent law mandates adjustment for often-soaring inflation when the mehr is returned by a husband to his wife during marriage or after a divorce.

Tens of thousands of women were left destitute because a once-hefty mehr had become a pittance by the time husbands left them. And within a marriage, a mehr that keeps up with inflation provides women independent financial power that cannot be diminished.

Polygamy also is still legal, but it is decreasing in practice and increasing in cost in part because another recent law introduced the right for women to initiate divorce and to receive back pay for housework and child rearing.

Another law added a woman assistant judge to advise on all

divorce cases—a precedent with wider implications because the judiciary is the only field outlawed for women in Islamic tradition. Other recent laws protect women in the work force, guaranteeing they can't lose jobs for family reasons and providing generous terms for part-time work or early retirement with pension.

Most women downplay the extent of change. "There is still no equality in family law or criminal law," said Mehrangiz Kar, a woman lawyer. "And some of these changes are only good steps to what we had in the past, not to the future. Before the revolution, women could be judges."

Yet the energy behind the debate has made women's rights a cutting-edge issue. "Never in Iran have we witnessed discussion like there is today," said Kar. "It's developing in the press, among clerics and by men in high positions. Not in a short time, but eventually it could change almost everything."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Government takes a hammering in the Lower House

Continued from page 1

ahead. Despite the initial signals, observers fear that if the draft passed unchanged or not substantially altered, deputies will be responsible for the demise of public freedom.

But when all was said and done, the debate last Monday brought a twinkle of hope to members. The deputies focused on the need to change what they called the "taboo" clauses, which hinder the press from carrying out its mission. They also suggested amending the proposed penalties and adjusting the amount of capital required by the newspapers.

The deputies were equally scathing about the ambiguity of the taboo clauses, which in effect authorize the director of the Press and Publication Dept. (PPD) to ask the judiciary to suspend any paper within 24 hours.

The attacks did not stop there. Deputies accused the government of hiding behind the King when presenting the draft. "The King is protected from questioning by the Constitution. Therefore, the government holds sole responsibility for its policies," said deputy Salamah Al Hayehar. Others like Abdel Razaq Teishah were equally forthright. He said that the draft plainly contradicts the previous statements of His Majesty, adding that King Hussein wants a comprehensive dialogue on the press law.

A number of pro-government legislators failed to close the debate, when they suggested a direct vote on referring the draft to the

National Guidance Committee for discussion. However, these suggestions were blocked by the majority of deputies, who insisted on discussing the draft further before referring it to the Committee.

Under duress, the President of the House allowed 40 deputies to express their opposition to the draft in its current form. Opposing the general viewpoint, deputy Abdel Hadi Al Majali, the brother of the premier, volunteered to launch the draft law, and urged the House to adopt the whole draft. Majali expressed dissatisfaction with the wide criticism of the draft from his colleagues in the House, whilst accusing the press of terrorizing the deputies through daily press campaigns against the draft law.

Cabinet members who attended the session came out exhausted after four hours of heavy discussion. Deputy Nazeem Amareen highlighted the mood, saying that "the government was shocked because it thought that deputies would never try to embarrass it."

Deputy Ghazi Al Sa'di preferred a tougher statement. He said the government suffered a true setback, one that it hadn't foreseen.

The House's Solidarity Bloc comprises of 17 deputies, and its spokesman, Fawzeh To'aymah declared that all the bloc members consider the draft to be "the most dangerous law that has ever been presented to the House." He continued to say that his alliance "supports a redrawing of the draft, in order to comply with the higher interests of Jordan."

To'aymah added that his bloc supports any initiative that opens a comprehensive dialogue between all the different press and political sectors, as this is the only way to achieve an acceptable press law.

Deputy Abdel Majeed Al Aqash expressed sadness about the inconsistent policies of the government, saying, "The government initially criticized the press for publishing pictures and stories that they claimed were damaging public morals, yet it is the same government whose official television station transmits live pictures of a far harsher kind."

Al Aqash expressed his astonishment at the secret manner surrounding the drawing up of the draft law. The secrecy illuminated the hostile attitude of the government towards the press. He also accused the government of pressuring members of the House through meetings organized by the Prime Minister, Abdel Salam Al Majali, which aimed at persuading them to ratify the draft law.

In another show of opposition to the severe clauses of the draft, contrist deputy Fayaz Al Zo'beid said the government is aiming to frighten newspapers and journalists. Al Zo'beid likened the authority given to the director of the PPD to that of "the lion implementing the rule of the jungle, where the strong devours the weak."

Finally, Deputy Mohammad Bani Hani argued that it is an odd policy that aims to restrict freedom of expression in an era of electronic and satellite communication.

Women's movement is opening up world of sport

By Robin Wright

TEHRAN, Iran—A critical new dimension to the women's movement in Iran comes from the younger generation that doesn't remember the old monarchy.

Its impact on women's lifestyles is sweeping. In official basketball games, Elahieh Adeli, a scrappy forward with more heart than height, could play only at all-female facilities such as the Hejab Club on Hejab Street—Los Angeles Avenue before the revolution. The only male allowed at a recent game was the 3-month-old son of Adeli's sister, the team captain, who sat in the bleachers nursing the infant during half time.

But sheer numbers, public

pressure and a recent relaxation in Iran's strict social code are opening up sports. About 2 million women now engage in athletics, a fivefold jump in the past two years and a whopping increase from the few thousand before the revolution. Women's facilities can no longer cope.

With fewer fears of punishment from the moral police, the genders have begun to mix in recreational sport at public parks, playing table tennis or badminton and jogging or skating. "As long as I am properly covered, no one bothers me when I play with the men," Adeli said.

After 3,000 women broke the gender barrier at Tehran's soccer stadium to greet the returning national soccer team after it qualified last December for the World Cup—the gov-

ernment began debating whether to allow female spectators to watch games. And in April it announced permission for a professional women's soccer league.

Although burdened with clumsy "hejab," or modest Islamic dress coverings, Iranian women have even begun competing at international events and showing. The shift was reflected when an Iranian woman not only competed in summer games for the first time since the revolution at the Atlanta Olympics—but carried the national flag as she led the team at the opening ceremony.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Iraq looks to the West

Continued from page 1

remains of special missile warheads. The Iraqi side rejected these results and both sides agreed to conduct further discussions on the issue.

Butler also reported that "Iraq refused to undertake additional steps to clarify the extent of its attempts to produce the chemical warfare agent VX."

Iraq stated that this matter was closed and that it was only ready to discuss the evidence available to the Commission. Aziz took strong exception to Butler's version of the exchange in a letter to the Security Council, Monday, saying Butler had been "incorrect" in asserting that Iraq had refused to clarify the extent of its efforts to produce VX.

Aziz reiterated that Iraq had presented all the necessary documents showing that it had not produced VX in 1990 or 1991, in a sufficiently stable manner to be utilized within the framework of the armament program.

He also asserted in his letter that Iraq has completed all disarmament activities required by a 1991 security resolution. The Iraqi official also said that a new work schedule agreed to with Butler would enable UNSCOM to submit its final report, clearing the way for the lifting of Gulf War sanctions.

US officials declined to discuss the report but did not dispute its conclusions. The new indications of Iraqi deception are also likely to reverberate in US politics, where conservative Republicans are increasingly critical of what they see as a failure by the Clinton administration to strongly support either aggressive UNSCOM inspections for mass

destruction, or efforts to overthrow Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Word of the new findings on VX gas began to circulate on Capitol Hill late last week, which led to the drafting of a letter to President Clinton from Republican congressional leaders. They demanded to know if Clinton would back up Butler in a confrontation with Baghdad. The letter was sent to the White House Monday night.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., one of the four GOP signatories of the letter, said he was "deeply disturbed" by reports that the administration has not acted on the VX information.

The latest example of a failed policy toward Iraq will not be swept under the rug. The issue of whether UNSCOM has received all the support it needs and deserves from the US will figure heavily in the nomination hearings of Richard Holbrooke [future US ambassador to the United Nations], Lott said.

State Department spokesman James P. Rubin denied GOP suggestions that the administration has accepted restrictions on UNSCOM inspections since the 23 February accord between UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and Saddam Hussein, which averted US military strikes. "We strongly support Richard Butler and UNSCOM," Rubin said.

Iraq is known to have used chemical weapons against Iran and against the Kurds in northern Iraq in the 1980s, and to have developed an extensive arsenal of biological and chemical weapons before the Gulf War.

In 1994, Wafiq Al Samurrai, then Saddam Hussein's chief of military intelligence, defected from Iraq and disclosed that at least 10 warheads filled with VX and 10 filled with anthrax had been available to Iraqi forces in 1991.

Iraq initially denied having done any work on VX, then admitted to having conducted some research on it, and finally admitted to having made 3.9 tons of it in the course of its research, which Iraqi officials claimed to have destroyed in secret. At a meeting with two panels of UN experts in Baghdad in February, Iraqi Gen. Amer Saadi, the head of Iraq's delegation, said that "if there was knowledge, it was only on a laboratory scale, without full understanding."

But the panel of experts dismissed these contentions and demanded that Iraq account for the large quantities of chemical warfare agents imported in the 1980s and for 500 missing warheads. This helped clear the way for a UNSCOM inspection in March of a pit where the Iraqis said they had disposed of many of the missing warheads.

The pit, located at the Tajil weapons production facility about 20 miles north of Baghdad, contained fragments of three warheads that UNSCOM shipped to the laboratory at Aberdeen. One of several labs worldwide used by the United Nations to test toxic agents.

"This is a smoking gun," Ahmed Chalabi, President of the Iraqi National Congress, said in a telephone interview Monday. "It shows that Saddam is still lying, and that this whole arrangement based on his turning his weapons of terror over to the United Nations is not workable."

Final death knell to the peace process

Continued from page 1

The judicialization process, or the governments intention of judicialization is not something that is kept secret.

At the end of the interim period, the Palestinians hope to establish an independent state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital. But Israel says that Jerusalem, including the traditionally Arab eastern sector, is its own eternal capital and will never be redivided.

"Netanyahu is trying to dictate the terms of the permanent status agreements," Palestinian negotiator Erekat said. "His government is working to upset the demographic composition of Jerusalem, annexing land and trying to bring more Jewish residents in at a time when they're demolishing Palestinian homes and confiscating Palestinian identity cards," he argued.

Arab leaders will finally be meeting today, Thursday, under the auspices of the Arab League, but again it is difficult to see what kind of action they could take that would force Israel to back away from its plan.

Summer French & Arabic language courses - All levels

The French Cultural Centre is now open for registration to all levels in French & Arabic languages. Registration runs till 27/6/98. Courses will be held from 27/6 till 22/7/98.

5 days a week 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

Centre Culturel Français et de Coopération Linguistique
المرکز الثقافي الفرنسي
Jebel Lweibdeh, Tel. 46 37 009 - 46 36 445 - 46 12 658

Call us now for details at French Cultural Centre, Jebel Lweibdeh, Tel. 46 37 009 - 46 36 445 - 46 12 658

THE STAR ONLINE

<http://star-arabia.com>

JORDAN

W E E K



An unconventional
report on Jordanian
news and views edited
by Marwan Al Asmar

Contractors

It is now the Jordan Contractors Association, but surprisingly, for an employers association, the Executive Council of the JCA has decided to expel 106 of its members for failing to pay their dues for the second year running. Their inability to pay very probably reflects on the very poor state of the industry. The JCA will hold an extraordinary session on Friday, 26 June.

Hail passport equality

It can be argued that Jordanian women are slowly getting there. If you are a married woman, you will soon be able to get your own passport without the consent of your spouse. The government have decided that enough is enough, and are now trying to rush through an amendment to the Passport Law of 1969, Article 12, which would mean that married women and older age children would again need the written consent of the male spouse before they can obtain a passport. This article has always been contentious and some officials admit that it violates Article 3 of the law, which states that "the acquisition of a Jordanian passport is the right of every Jordanian citizen..." In the meantime, the change in the law is being welcomed by many women's organizations in the country.

The communists

The Jordan Communist Party has decided to freeze the membership of its for General Secretary, Yacoub Zayadeen, for one year. The reason for such action, it is argued, relates to the failure of Dr Zayadeen to toe the party line, by using the press to discuss party differences, for his accusations that the CIA has infiltrated the party and that a number of leaders in the JCP were receiving funds from that intelligence agency. The former boss later retracted these accusations. However, many think that Zayadeen got off lightly, as another party member, Dr Mazen Hannan, was expelled altogether from the party.

Al Bashir modernized

Al Bashir governmental hospital in Amman will receive a \$20 million loan from the World Bank to cover modernization costs of the present premises. The modernization plan will be executed over two phases, in the first (two years) two new buildings will be constructed to accommodate 500 beds for patients and surgery wards. In the second phase another two buildings will be established with 400 beds and then the old buildings will be removed. The new premises of Al Bashir is expected to be linked with tunnels and bridges.

Football

A new sports weekly will appear on newsstands within the next two weeks. Al Faisli has just been given a license by the government. It is owned by the Al Faisli Football Club. The weekly will now join Al Wihdat, a well-established weekly by published by Al Wihdat Football Club.

Taxi drivers

Most taxi drivers are praying that the World Cup season will soon end. Taxi drivers are dismayed. They say that the World Cup has practically destroyed their business. They ask incredulously where are the passengers pointing out that Amman has become a ghost town.

Banning of chemical weapons

The Regional Seminar on Banning Chemical Weapons started its meetings at Amman Regency Hotel Wednesday under the auspices of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali. Participants from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Turkey, Brunei, Sudan, Bahrain, Indonesia and Israel are taking part in the seminar. The participants are highlighting issues related to the banning of weapons of mass destruction. This pact which calls for disarmament and removal of weapons of mass destruction was signed by 165 countries in a special ceremony held in 1993 in Paris. It is endorsed by 110 countries.

Workshop on NGOs in Amman

A training workshop on design and marketing of NGO projects is starting on 28 June at the Regency Hotel. The three-day event which lasts till 1 July has a number of objectives: to highlight the importance of the choice of projects to achieve their particular targets; to enhance the expertise of the participants in the design and marketing of projects; to increase 'technical' communication between NGOs; and finally to strengthen the relations between the participants and those participating in the workshop. The regional event is organized between the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation, the Beirut-based International Management and Training Institute and the BUNIAN (Capacity Management and Networking of NGOs organization). Participants are from Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Palestine.

Media fuels 'battle of wills' as press law debate continues

AMMAN (Star)—The draft press and publication law, which is currently going through parliament, continues to be the major topic of conversation among the press community. This is not surprising since the draft, if passed, promises to be the most repressive yet, more so than the one that existed during the martial law era.

What is so shocking for journalists is that the draft law is seen as the very antithesis of the democratic process which Jordan and the Jordanian people have sought to strengthen since 1989.

Indeed, while members of the press community may be the first to admit that the press, especially the weeklies may have indulged in sensationalism, nevertheless they see the draft as an onslaught on their profession and the very nature of freedom of expression.

What is interesting today—something that has probably never happened before—is a 'battle of wills' that is rapidly gaining pace between the government and the press community.

Since it is the initiator of the draft, the government, may have gained a headstart. Ever since the High Court rejected

the temporary press law in the early months of this year, the government has been painstakingly working on a watertight draft press and publications law.

But it is precisely this elaborate process that is creating deep suspicion and anxiety amongst the press and civic institutions. If the draft is a modern piece of legislation why then all the secrecy, why haven't those concerned, like the Press Association, been properly consulted? The surreptitious manner in which the government has drawn up the draft has created deep anxiety in the industry.

Today the government is using every trick in the book to make its views heard. For the first time, it is adopting a high profile. Not only is it making full use of radio and television but also of newspapers. One recent example of this is the full page interview of Bilal Al Tal, director of the Press and Publications Dept., that appeared in Al Rai early this week. He has been appearing regularly on national television in the past few weeks to give the government line, and has been doing so rather effectively.

The government has lost to

the courts once, and it wants to make sure that it does not lose again. They are going after the heart and mind of the ordinary man in the street to plead their case—one that has already been formulated.

Opposing their stance are the newspapers. Through their newspapers they are trying to make their views known as cogently and as coherently as possible. Dailies like Ad Dustour, Al Rai, and Al Arab Al Youm run daily commentaries, news, analyses and opinions about the new draft.

There is indeed a battle of wills going on. Newspapers also seem to be chasing public opinion, leaders' opinions—they are even pandering to legislators. In all fairness, however, the legislators have said that they will listen to the journalists' opinions and make sure that they receive a proper hearing while the draft is being discussed.

This is a crucial stage. Optimists are saying that the draft law is not in the government's bag yet, and that they still have everything to fight for. However, for the pessimists, it is a foregone conclusion. The game has already been played and won by the government. It is only a matter of time.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, delivered a lecture at the Royal War College on Tuesday. He called for the building up of cooperating institutions and mechanisms to achieve genuine and lasting security and stability in the region. Prince Hassan added that lack of mechanisms and institutions, such as a conflict resolution center, could transform disputes into military and security conflicts in the already tense region.

Not an easy job

With poverty on the increase, finding solutions must be made a priority

By Ibtisam Awadat
Star Staff Writer

FROM THE very first step inside what is supposed to be a house, you can see and smell poverty. Old, secondhand furniture, and clothes, which seem about ready to fall off the owners' backs, are all signs of one family living below the poverty line.

"Do you want me to worry about clothes and furniture? My first priority is to feed my hungry children," exclaimed Abu Ahmad, a laborer—when there is work available. He has no educational or vocational certificates to enable him to find a better job.

"I earn 90 dinars per month. I pay rent and bills, the rest goes on food," Abu Ahmad is preparing his eldest son, 14, to become an assistant mechanic in a garage.

"The fact we are poor has not prevented me from providing an education for all the members of my family. Hopefully they will now be able to provide for themselves," Abu Ahmad does not have any regrets. "I did my best, and I hope and pray that my sons will be able to change the harsh conditions I live under," Abu Ahmad added.

In another area of Amman, lives a woman who has 11 children. "People think I am a widow, but I am not. I kicked my husband out," Umm Nadim, 40, told The Star in tears.

"When our last child was born, my husband started staying out late at night, then he would come home drunk and ask for money. Sometimes he would beat the children or me."

Yet, Umm Nadim, despite her miserable life, still has a soft spot for her husband. Looking back, she would always find an excuse for his behavior.

"He couldn't come to terms with the way his life had turned

out, and we lost him from the very first drink. After leaving him I sought to rebuild my life with my children away from suffering and pain."

Umm Nadim now works as a maid and she is saving up to buy a sewing-machine. "The first payment is nearly ready, then I will pay the rest in monthly installments. Umm Nadim is determined to provide a better future for her children even if she has to work day and night.

Examples of self-sacrifice, struggle and survival are common. Figures show that those on the poverty line are increasing. The fast Ministry of Social Development classified poverty into two categories. The first is "subject poverty" meaning that the individual is unable to obtain the minimum standard of nutritional need. The second category is "absolute poverty." Anyone who can not meet the minimum standard of nutritional and non-nutritional needs is placed in this

category, which accounts for 21 percent of the population.

Despite the seriousness of poverty, only a few studies have been done to tackle the issue in Jordan. Experts attribute this to the amount of money and time needed to carry out such research.

The on-going study we have now measures the ratio of a family's income to its expenditure," said Mr Abd Al Haleem Kharabshah from the General Statistics Dept. "The results will be analyzed by the Ministry of Social Development, and experts in the ministry will then be able to determine different levels of poverty," Kharabshah added.

As a response to the rise in poverty, many institutions and societies, from both the private and public sectors, are devoting part of their budgets to rehabilitate the poor. This is achieved by providing short and long term loans, or through development projects.

One such project is the National Aid Fund (NAF), which was established in 1986. Up to 1997, the Fund has distributed JD 81.6 million to 52,193 families. NAF's Director, Dr Adel Shamayleh, said, "We encourage the needy

to establish productive programs by providing them with interest-free loans."

The fund pays monthly salaries to 330,000 families. The amount we give depends on the size of the family and the benefits range from JD 30 to JD 80," Shamayleh added.

However, only 40 percent of families classified within the poverty bracket receive any benefit, leaving the remaining 60 percent with no support at all.

"We would like to reach all the poor families, but our modest budget does not allow for this," he said. NAF's budget reached JD20 million in 1997, and increased by another JD 400,000 in 1998. But, "if we want to reach all the poor families we need at least JD 60 million," Shamayleh admitted.

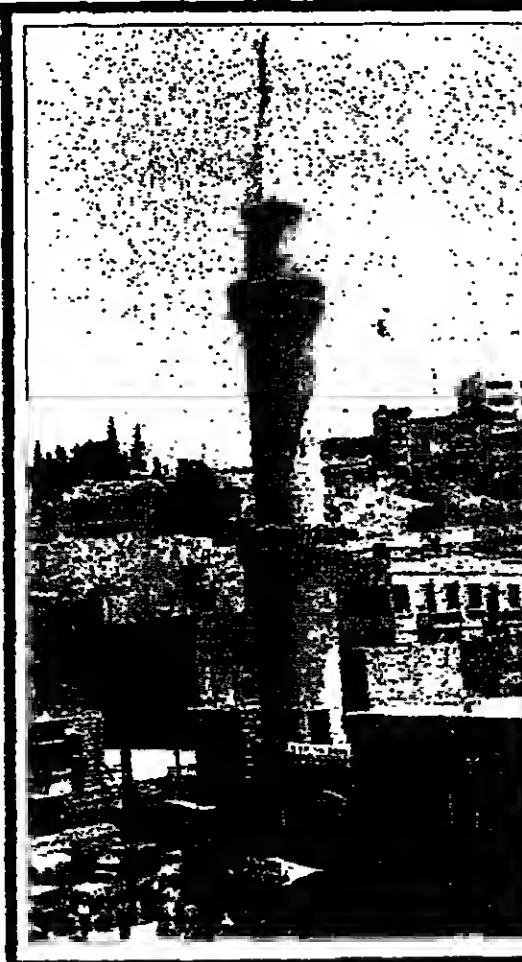
NAF will receive another JD 2.5 million from a Social Security Package next year but he added, "To reduce poverty, we must have real economic development, as this will provide job opportunities for the poor. Unless sincere efforts are made on a worldwide scale, this problem will remain with us for the foreseeable future."

Mosques receive special treatment

AMMAN (Star)—"Taking Care of the Mosque Week" commenced last Sunday at an opening by the Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali. The idea of the Week, which is organized by the Ministry of Awqaf, is to make the public more aware of the need to take care of mosques in Jordan. Many workshops relating to Islamic teachings, the Koran, the role of preachers, etc. are being taking place through out the week.

In addition, there are 25 scientific and cultural seminars of a topical nature being held by eminent Islamic experts, and other items on topics which affect the man in the street, such as road awareness, the "shooting in the air" phenomenon, which is frequent during marriage ceremonies, and the increasing cost of dowries. These are burning issues today, and likely to be of great interest to Jordanians. There are also topics on the need to save water and electricity. There are over 600 mosques in Amman alone. During the Week 130 centers for the study of the Koran will be opened.

Samih Othamneh, the director of Awqaf affairs for the Amman governorate said that the Week was designed to inspire those who frequent mosques to get more involved in voluntary work, which is part of Islamic teaching.



Lost artefacts find new home

AMMAN (Star)—The exhibition titled "Archaeology: Reality and Concerns" which is running at the Antiquities Dept., (near the Goethe Institute, 3rd Circle) is about informing the public about stolen artefacts.

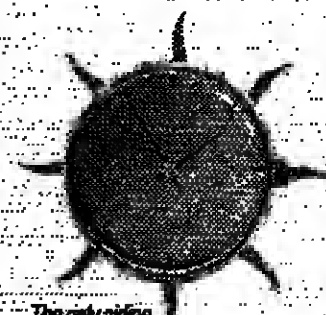
The various photographic displays show the extent of the problem in Jordan, drawing on past and present cases of theft. Jerash and Hamam As Sarhure are just two of the archaeological sites highlighted in the exhibition, and they show what people will do in order to make money. In Jerash, missing column heads are spotlighted, whilst at the Hamam As Sarhure it is the removal of the majority of stone blocks for building purposes which is the problem.

The exhibition intends to inform the

public about the role it can play in preventing such crimes from taking place in the future. The fact that all the artefacts on display have been recovered by the police should serve as a warning to all those intent on pursuing such activities.

Another case highlighted is a personal one; regarding Paula Dana from America, who returned various artefacts recently to the Antiquities Dept., (including 1st Century ceramic bowls), having purchased them unknowingly from an illegal source 30 years ago.

The exhibition will run in Amman until 12 July (opening hours are from 9.30 to 1.30 daily, except Friday), after which it will tour the country, the first stop being Irbid.



The only airline
with Departure and Arrival
on Wide Awake Hours

City
Terminal
Advance
Check In

The only airline with
Advance Check In



RJ Down Class
Fastlane Business Travel



USA
EVERY
DAY



Direct to Detroit
starting May 20th



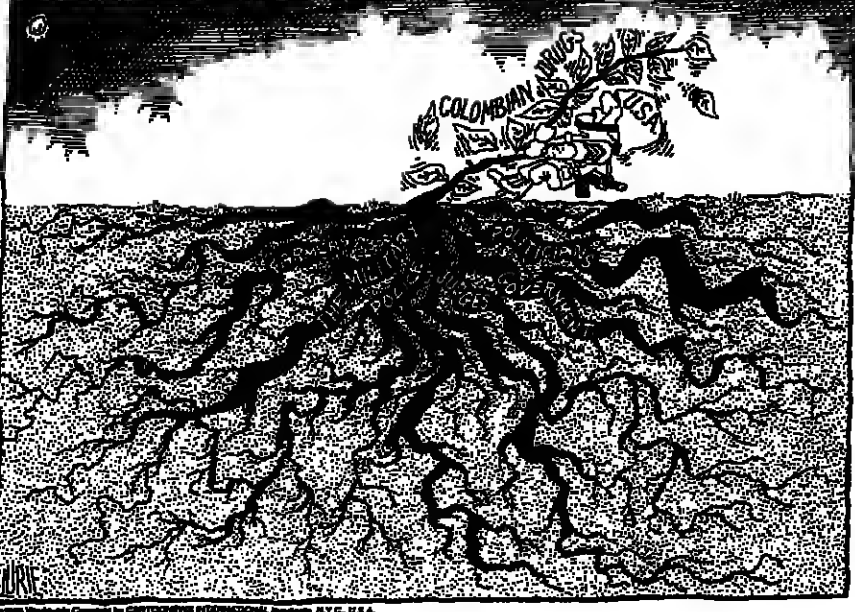
Aladdin Casino, Beirut, Damascus,
Larnaca and Agia
City on RJ

ROYAL JORDANIAN

Reflecting the Change.

The Most Convenient Way to the USA and Europe is the Jordanian Way.

Lurie's NewsCartoon



Pulling weeds

Our Say...

Standing up to Netanyahu

ONCE AGAIN the Arabs find themselves cornered by an indefatigable Benjamin Netanyahu, a man whose election to the highest post in Israel three years ago reversed the fortunes of the budding Middle East peace process. Since he came to power, the US sponsored process to end the Arab-Israeli conflict politically and peacefully has witnessed consistent erosion until today nothing remains of it but the name and bad reputation.

Netanyahu has been faithful to his supporters, most of whom are hardline right wingers who do not believe in peaceful co-existence with the Arabs or in a land-for-peace exchange with the Palestinians. Netanyahu's adamant and tough stands have succeeded in deflecting shy American efforts to put the peace process back on track. In the meantime, he had reneged on Israel's peace promises by unleashing a massive campaign to confiscate Arab lands, expand settlements, demolish Palestinian homes and deny the PNA access to air and sea ports. But the main achievement of Netanyahu was to delay indefinitely Israeli withdrawals from the Occupied Territories. He has done so in spite of US, European and Arab pressures and threats, and today he feels confident enough to embark on a dangerous plan to expand the size of Jerusalem and change the character of that city forever.

The timing of Netanyahu's latest moves signifies that he has the upper hand in the diplomatic row between Tel Aviv and Washington. And why not? With Arab reaction muted and insignificant, the Israeli Prime Minister is riding on a wave of popular support at home and is even ready to put the issue to a referendum. The leader and the people have struck a chord and as a result of that pack the Middle East peace process became history, an anachronism in Netanyahu's world.

Against this apocalyptic backdrop the real tragedy appears to be anchored in Arab ranks than anywhere else. It is pathetic that Netanyahu understands only too well Arab weakness and lack of resolve. This is precisely the secret of his strength, more than anything else.

The Arab world has failed to formulate a suitable response to the rise of Netanyahu, and as the man and his ideas force themselves on the region, it becomes a matter of absolute urgency to demand that an Arab reaction takes place.

Netanyahu talks peace but his actions spell war, disaster and upheaval for the entire region. It is high time that the Arabs dispell any remaining misconceptions about the Netanyahu agenda and come out with a response that will check Israel's cancerous expansion under the guise of peace.

The United States has failed miserably in addressing the Netanyahu challenge. It has lost its credibility and the diplomatic initiative and left the region in a situation that is much worse than before. An Arab summit is a must at this stage.

Letters to the Editor

Seeking cancer patients

To The Editor,
As part of an international survey of cancer patients' responses to cancer treatments they have received, I would like to ask if any of your readers who have received any kind of cancer treatment, orthodox or unorthodox, would like to write to me to share their experiences, with the specific objective of pointing out the value of a particular treatment or, alternatively, of showing the inadequacy or danger of any particular treatment. It is hoped that these stories will be published for the benefit of new cancer patients.

Stories can be sent to me at the following address:

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Chamberlain
Author of "Fighting Cancer-A Survival Guide"
E-mail:
jchamberlain33@hotmail.com

Travel features

To The Editor,
As a visitor to Amman, I am writing to commend you on the many interesting news and feature articles in your paper.
I am keen to see more of the country during my stay and wondered if you have any plans to run travel items focusing on culture, history and lifestyle across the country?

In the meantime, I will continue to enjoy the *The Star* while I am here, and online when I return home.

Yours faithfully,

G. McGhie, Edinburgh

Editor's reply:

Dear Ms McGhie,
Thank you for your letter. While we do not intend to run a regular travel section, we will from time to time feature articles on different parts of Jordan. We hope you continue to enjoy the paper.

The Editor

The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

An independent political, economic and cultural weekly, published every Thursday in Amman by Media Services International (Info-Media).
Editorial & Advertising: Telephones 4652-380, 4645-380, Fax 4648-298,
P.O. Box 9313, Postal Code 11191 Amman - Jordan, email: Star@arabia.com
URL: http://www.star-arabia.com

Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

Osama El-Sherif

Managing Editor

Dr Marwan Al Asmar

Editorial Team

Raed Al Abed (Home News Editor),

Iham Sadeq (Economic Editor),

Yannick Laine (French Editor), Zeid Nasser (Technology Editor).

Management & Production

Mahmoud Fares (General Administration), Zaki Qurban (Layout & Design),

Ali Nimer (Accountant), Mahmud Shawkat (Photographer)

The Star is serviced by LA Times-Washington Post News Service, Cartoonists International (Lurie cartoons), PANOS, The WorldPaper, Editors Press Service, STILLS and by correspondents in the United States and South Asia.
Member of The International Advertising Association

Subscriptions: (annual) Jordan JD 20, Arab countries US\$ 100, W. Europe US\$ 150, USA & Canada US\$ 200.

Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

Summer of '54: a history of state-sponsored terrorism

By Samir Raafat

MS VICTORINE Marcelle Ninio (which she spelled Nigno) was a native of Cairo and a one-time Olympic contender who had played basketball at the Hakoah Club on Selegar Street, Heliopolis. The combination of geopolitics, youth and personal ideals pushed her into the forefront of regional events in July 1954.

Although born and raised in Egypt, Ninio had thrown in her lot with the newly created State of Israel. If in 1948 she had not suspected her actions could be catalytic to the downfall of Egypt's thriving Jewish community, by the time she faced sentence in 1955 she had no lingering doubts.

Ninio and her associates had been indirectly responsible for the hastening of 50,000 Jews out of Egypt. On a more personal note, Armando Carmona, a close companion of Ninio's family, allegedly took his own life (or was encouraged to) upon discovering his Heliopolis flatmate had been indicted in a covert Israeli-led operation.

The physically challenged Carmona (walking disability) worked for the The Cairo Electric Railways & Heliopolis Oases Company, known to most simply as The Heliopolis Company. It was his habit after working hours to join his friends at the nearby Heliopolis Sporting Club for a round of cards. Failing to appear one day, his anxious partners advised the police. Upon entering his flat at 6 Rue Ibis, off Avenue des Pyramides, Armando was found hanging from the ceiling. To this day, Marcelle Carmona-Fisher, who lives outside Tel Aviv, failed to resolve the riddle of her father's death. Her attempts to obtain answers from the Israeli government have been persistently stonewalled.

As it transpired during the Cairo investigation, Armando's friend Marcelle Ninio was part of an espionage network run by

the Israeli military. Their objective: To spread havoc in Cairo and Alexandria by planting bombs in crowded public areas such as cinema theaters, the main railway stations and central post office in both cities. And to discredit Egypt to the West, the American USIS libraries and British Councils in both cities were also added as an afterthought.

In other words, Marcelle Ninio and her colleagues were licensed to kill civilians using fire bombs.

It was Ninio's ultimate controllers, most of them senior Israeli officers who laid out the gameplan. Also in the know were privileged members of the political Israeli apparatus including cabinet members-to-be like Shimon Peres, Moshe Dayan and Ben-Gurion (then in retirement). The code name for this mission of death was Operation Shoshana (Susana) known in history books as the Lavon Affair or Esek Bish (the Mishap).

A latter day name for this deadly operation was Ha-Purushah (the case). Like the multiple names associated with this operation its objectives went beyond destabilizing Egypt's new republican regime or causing dissension in Egyptian-British-US relations.

Aside from forestalling the withdrawal of British troops from the Canal Zone, its success or failure notwithstanding, another equally important objective of this operation was to poison relations between mainstream Egyptians and the 50,000 Jews who had remained in Egypt after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Operations similar to Shoshana had been primed elsewhere in the Middle East where large Jewish communities existed, the most important being the 1949/50 Operation Ali Baha in the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq, when Israeli agents went after Jewish targets wounding and killing innocent bystanders near Baghdad's Sheml of Synagogue.

Predictably, requests for exit visas started pouring in and within a year, Iraq's largest and most important, non-Muslim minority numbering in the tens of thousands relocated in Israel.

Without resorting to such drastic measures in Egypt, had Israel's policy-makers waited, Egyptian Jews would have left anyway at their own free cognizance. Like Egypt's Italian, Greek, Armenian and Syrian-Lebanese minorities, all of whom found the new combination of nationalism and a state controlled economy distasteful, the Jews would have had no reason to remain.

Ever since the days of Viceroy Mohammed Ali Pasha, (r.1805-48), laissez faire and free enterprise had been the mainstay of the nation's enlightened minorities. Lacking the elements which had attracted foreigners to Egypt, why would these minorities remain?

And with the arrival of socialism in 1961, it was the turn for Muslim and Coptic members of Egypt's business class to apply for immigrant visas, an unprecedented phenomenon in a country that had accepted economic migrants throughout the ages.

Operation Shoshana—a.k.a. Susana, Lavon, the Mishap, the Affair—failed because, Paul Frank (alias Avraham Siedenberg or Avri El Ad), one of the 13 Israeli agents involved, had had second thoughts. An undecided Zionist, he snitched to an Egyptian undercover agent in Germany. Concomitant to sparing innocent Egyptian lives, Frank's action eventually brought down the government of Moshe Sharet in Israel, starting with the February 1955 resignation of Defense Minister Pinchas Lavan.

Like many other disturbing facts in Israel's first 50 years, Operation Shoshana was buried and forgotten by the official propagandists. When its perpetrators were rounded up in Cairo no one from Israel stepped forward to take responsibility of their operation. If ever men-

tioned, Ninio and her accomplices were referred to as saboteurs (never as terrorists) by the western press.

Diverse court verdicts were delivered on January 27, 1955, ranging from two death sentences to several years in prison, some of them in absentia. Predictably, the Cairo rulings sent Israel into an unofficial state of mourning. There were emotional promises to dedicate a street in Ramat Gan and Beer-sheva each in honor of the fallen "victims", an action which would have its equivalent today in renaming one of Gaza's streets in commemoration of a Tel Aviv suicide bus bomber.

Marcelle Ninio and three of her colleagues were released during the 1967 June War prisoner exchanges. No one knew she had returned to Israel, for in her country of adoption like in her country of birth, Ninio was a source of political embarrassment. The situation changed only after Prime Minister Golda Meir personally announced in 1974 she would attend Ninio's wedding. That year, what had been deliberately ignored for so long came out on Israel's national TV. Operation Shoshana was no longer a carefully guarded state secret.

Throughout the polemic, the word "terrorism" was over-brought up. With the help of propagandists abroad and with the assistance of an immensely powerful Jewish lobby in the United States, the terms "agents" or "saboteurs" were used instead.

Equally remarkable in this whole affair is how one of the first prototype of organized state sponsored terrorism in the region, was shrouded under tons of secrecy acts and waves of disinformation campaigns. How the usually merciless and overzealous media never insisted. The Israeli state apparatus did not realize then that one day the chicken would come home to roost, this time against civilians in Tel-Aviv buses.

Middle East
East
by
Khairi Jaber

Ending dual containment

CRITICS OF the US policy of dual containment towards Iraq and Iran may have a new feeling of optimism with recent indications that the punitive embargo against Iraq may soon be lifted, and the atmosphere of animosity towards Iran is leaning more towards reconciliation in terms of words between the two countries.

The only precipitate left of the policy of dual containment is the increasing misery of the Iraqi people, and the suspicion of US intentions engendered in Iran. In addition, the vacuum created in the Gulf region has left a deep sense of uncertainty with the constant possibility of increased tension and armed conflict.

Things will not change overnight, but there now seems to be an implicit understanding that the US position vis-a-vis Iran and Iraq cannot remain endlessly strapped in a straight-jacket. Similarly, Iran and Iraq both have to come to terms with the new outlook of the international community.

It is essential that both countries are rehabilitated for the benefit of the whole region, to return stability to an area which is governed by the wealth of its natural resources. Technicalities must be fulfilled and many differences must be ironed out, but there is at last hope of eliminating the problem of "rogue states" which will ease dealings with the wider international community.

Perhaps we can also look forward to sanctions being lifted from Libya and the Sudan, and reintegrate these countries into the international community along with their brethren in the Arab and Islamic world.

It is not feasible for the US to continue searching for the best weapons to humiliate and humiliate Arab countries, who a common code of "ethical standards" can go a long way to eliminate misconceptions and bring about the desired convergence.

No sooner do we look forward to a new positive attitude, the Red Sea basin became the latest hot spot of conflict as war rages between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Eritrea, can, of course, choose its own identity, Arab or other, but it has unfortunately also chosen to increase tension with Yemen and the Sudan, prior to rekindling an old war with Ethiopia. The strategic significance of the conflict is the threat to the entry areas of the Red Sea, and Israel's role in supporting Eritrea. Eritrea and Israel both have the right to hold relations with whomever they choose, but up till now, the target of the Eritreans has been Arab countries, which in turn exacerbates suspicion about Israeli support for aggression against the Arab world.

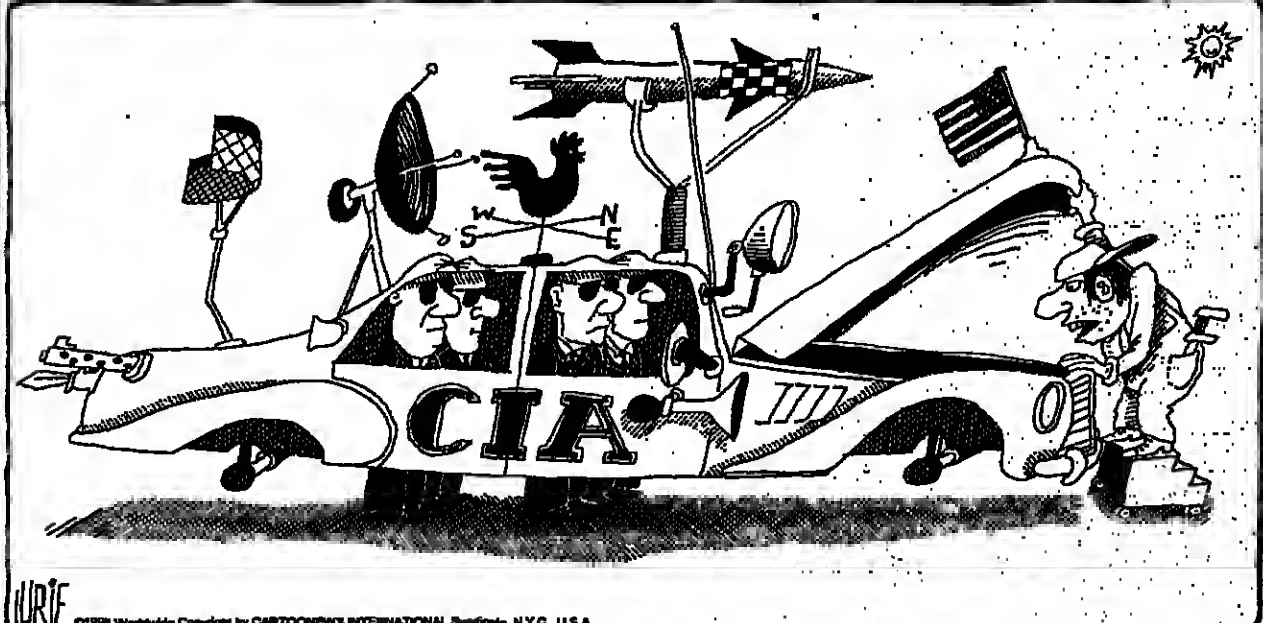
What has been achieved in terms of peace must not be jeopardized by helping to ignite conflicts in areas where Arab geography has preponderant weight. It seems, however, that the hegemony of Eritrea in the Red Sea is very important to Israel, as a possible angle for a new dual containment policy.

Another puzzling factor is news about alleged meetings in Europe and the US between Israeli government representatives and representatives from the warring parties of Afghanistan, including Taliban, with the aim of installing electronic equipment to observe Iran's nuclear program developments.

If the alleged meetings really have taken place, they have been denied by the Afghans—a few Afghani warlords have engaged in a power struggle and allowed it to get to the point where it has become the playing of the highest external bidder—Israeli or otherwise.

The importance of the Arab world in dealing with the Afghan conflict will continue to offer possibilities for others to interfere, giving them more opportunities to divide the Islamic world. This should come as no surprise to us—that others take advantage and succeed where we have failed to understand shifts in the geo-political balances that govern our area—when we have failed to define the term "our area" to begin with.

Lurie's NewsCartoon



"What engine?"

Moroccan Desert (Arabic) by Abdallah M. Al Qaq, Amman, Ad Dustour Commercial Presses, 1998, pp168

SELDOM DO we read a book about the conflict between Morocco and the disputed Polisario region. While this conflict has gone on for a long time, very little has been written on the dynamics of the problem in this part of the world.

Abdallah Al Qaq's latest book goes a long way to rectify this. He adopts a humanitarian perspective on the issue. The book attempts to highlight the relationship between the Moroccan central government and its relationship to the people, particularly those living in the outback.

The "outback" has long been a bone of contention, and the book is a timely one since the desert people are now preparing for a national referendum on 6 December. Organized by the United Nations, the referendum is to decide whether the people of the region wish to remain as part of Morocco or if they would prefer an independent state of their own.

The book is written by a seasoned journalist, and the present managing editor of *Ad Dustour* Arabic daily. He has paid many visits to the region where he met with leading Moroccan figures including former ministers,



Al Qaq

politicians and general secretaries of the various parties.

Another interesting detail in the book, is Al Qaq's meeting with former members of the Polisario Front, as this gives the Arab reader a balanced view of the problem.

The book also sheds light on the historical nature of the problem, its internal dynamics, its relationship to the central government in Marrakesh, and its internationalization.

The book is easy to read and filled with pictures about life in the country furthest west in the Arab World.



ordinary people in the region, most of whom told him they will be voting for a united Morocco, and not for separation. If they do choose

the latter, many people believe that Morocco would be reduced to a mere cantons.

Business scene

■ Total premiums received by Jordanian insurance companies were JD 84.9 million, but there are still three companies that haven't disclosed their fiscal results. Insurance sources expect the overall figure to be just close to JD90 million recorded in 1996. This year many insurance companies were obliged to raise their capital to at least JD3 million and readjust their status. Some have done so, but others are still negotiating mergers.

■ Jordanian Exporters Society is planning to organize an exhibition of Jordanian products in Algeria, September 29-October 1. The first expo of its kind, it will open doors for the mutual exchange of goods and enhance trade ties between the Jordanian and Algerian private sectors. Jordanian exports to Algeria include pharmaceuticals, ready-to-wear clothes, chemicals, detergents, foodstuffs and utensils. The volume of these exports totalled JD21.5 million last year against JD 1.1 million imports. This compares with exports of JD 6.4 million and imports of JD 154,000 in 1996.

■ Local credit granted by the banking sector saw a 3.2% growth by the end of last April compared with April 1997. It reached JD 485.2 million, divided among licensed banks (JD 403.2 million) and JD 820 million by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ). Credits offered to the private sector by the end of April stood at JD 390.5 million, showing a 8.2% increase compared with last year, according to the CBJ's latest statistics bulletin.

However, CBJ's general budget showed a slight decline in the volume of assets in the past year, as they were JD 3558 million, rising 13.8% since 1997. Deposits at the local banks were JD 20.80 million, while deposits at governmental institutions were JD 152.9 million. Foreign reserves at the CBJ reached JD 2513.5 million, showing an increase of 23.8% compared with April last year. Total facilities donated by licensed banks stood at JD 4136.3 million, making a 4.1% rise from April, 1997. Inflation rose by 5.5% over the last year due to a rise in foodstuff prices and the cost of living.

Foreign Exchange

| | Buy JD | Sell JD |
|-----------|--------|---------|
| US\$ | 0.7080 | 0.7100 |
| £ | 1.1510 | 1.1588 |
| DM | 0.4124 | 0.4145 |
| SFR | 0.4801 | 0.4825 |
| FRF | 0.1227 | 0.1233 |
| YEN (100) | 0.5624 | 0.5652 |
| DEM | 0.3667 | 0.3685 |
| LIT (100) | 0.0419 | 0.0421 |

Money laundering

Its impact on the economy

By Star Staff Writer

THE PRACTICE of laundering money from illegal operations, such as smuggling weapons or trading in drugs, exposes the state's economy to endless hazards. This phenomenon is on the increase and those involved in the racket continue to 'launder' their ill-gotten cash through banks to negate its illegality before pumping it into legitimate businesses.

In Jordan, though the practice is not yet so commonplace, economic experts and analysts are highlighting its negative effects and are planning ways to combat it in future. Mr. Wasif Azar, general director of the National Bank of Jordan pointed out that Jordanian banks have realized the impact of this problem on the economy.

Mr. Azar argues that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) gives instructions to local banks to fight these operations and be on the lookout for people making dubious transfers.

Local bank branches should be particularly aware when dealing with exchanges made in foreign currency, especially if the levels are 'unusually high' or if the bank doesn't have any information about their proper source. Such cooperation by local branches could help prevent money laundering in Jordan.

Financial researcher Husam Ayyesh, from the Department of Research and Financial Planning at the Arab Bank said that the term 'money laundering' is relatively unfamiliar here, though it is widely used in the United States particularly with reference to the Mafia. About 70 percent of money gained through the sale of drugs in the US is laundered.

Statistics indicate that overall annual sales made by the illegal drugs industry worldwide are estimated at \$500 billion, generating a total profit margin of 98%.

Also, according to UN estimates, about \$300 billion per year was spent on laundering money during the 1980s. In the 1990s, this amount rose to about \$350 billion a year.

As far as Jordan is concerned, Mr. Ayyesh said that such a phenomenon could barely be seen in the banking system. Nevertheless, he added as

social problems may also result from the gap between per capita income and actual productivity. The worst case scenario would be the formation of a type of 'hubble economy'—lacking a solid and legitimate financial base.

Source of illegal money come from other areas, not just from drugs



long as there is no deterrent or legislation prohibiting money laundering it will probably continue to creep into our system.

Referring to the negative effect of 'money laundering' on the national economy, Mr. Ayyesh explained, 'It could cause corruption or create political and economic imbalance. It also diminishes the state's revenue through lost taxes.'

Furthermore, the national currency could be devalued and destabilized, and inflation levels will rise. New

or smuggled weapons. 'It exists in other forms such as bribery, tampering with public property, commissions, theft and tax evasion.' Mr. Ayyesh elaborated.

'People involved in this malpractice register the money and property in the name of their relatives or pump it into legitimate channels or businesses. Also, some put the money into charities and launder it through the system this way.'

To eliminate this phenomenon, Mr. Ayyesh thinks that special legislation

has to be introduced to catch major perpetrators of money laundering and unveil their illegitimate practices. The whole banking system must cooperate to follow up dubious transfers or accounts.

Husam Al Abed, a researcher and writer in a bulletin called Money Laundering Alert (MLA) in the Middle East said that the term 'money laundering' was first introduced in 1973 in the aftermath of the Watergate case, which involved the former American President Nixon. Al Abed suggested certain measures that should be taken to help put a stop to the practice.

First of all, the bank should know their clients well, by checking their identities, keeping an eye on their accounts and business transfers. Also, the bank should trace clients' operations by following the path of the money which may have come from illegal sources. It is imperative that big transactions are monitored especially thoroughly.

Banks must also be vigilant when dealing with people, banks or companies whose countries' banking systems don't implement methods to combat money laundering. It is also important to enhance cooperation between banks and the police.

But what makes certain countries a prime target for money launderers? It could be the lack of legislation and tough penalties to punish those involved. It could also be the absence of surveillance on many foreign currency exchanges and the loopholes in the supervision system in banking institutions. However, corruption may well be the main cause—when bribery prevails among bank employees.

Some countries are also off-shore havens for illegal money, encouraging money launderers to deposit their capital in their banks to benefit from accounts which protect the client's privacy. So far, thank God, this phenomenon doesn't exist in Jordan.

Oil-price slump may force Gulf states to trim spending

By John Lancaster

KUWAIT—The recent slide in oil prices is playing havoc with the petroleum-powered sheikdoms of the Persian Gulf, highlighting their dependence on fickle international markets and generating renewed pressure on governments for economic diversification and reform.

With oil now selling for less than \$15 a barrel, down from \$22 in October, major oil producers such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are suddenly forecasting serious budget shortfalls that could force painful cuts in subsidies for housing, education and other politically sensitive programs.

Earlier this spring, Kuwaiti Oil Minister Nasser Sabaud Sabah warned his country could be headed for an 'economic catastrophe,' a fear shared by rulers in neighboring Saudi Arabia, which loses an estimated \$2.6 billion in revenue for every \$1 drop in the price of a barrel of oil. In non-Arab Iran, which gets almost half its revenue from oil, the government recently revised its budget assumptions on oil prices from \$16 to \$12 a barrel.

More broadly, the price slide has spotlighted once again the distortions of the region's artificial oil-based economies—and revived a long-simmering debate over the need for a top-to-bottom overhaul.

The problem is that governments can no longer count on oil revenue to meet the needs of their young, fast-growing populations. There is general agreement on the solution: Govern-

ments need to wean themselves from oil by encouraging the creation of vibrant private sectors, which in turn will generate the jobs and growth that oil no longer can provide.

But that entails politically painful measures such as slashing middle-class subsidies and shrinking government bureaucracies, the primary source of employment in the Gulf Arab states.

Such austerity measures—implemented by autocratic and unelected leaders who will not share equally in the pain—could cause resentment among ordinary citizens, fueling Islamic extremism and threatening Western strategic interests in the Gulf.

Mindful of such risks, Gulf Arab leaders generally have avoided hard economic choices, preferring to cross their fingers and hope for a rise in oil prices. But government officials in the region are increasingly willing to acknowledge the shortcomings of that approach.

'The recent decline in oil prices may be a blessing in disguise for us,' Saudi said in a recent interview. 'Although it has been difficult for us to do in the past politically, maybe we can search for alternative sources of income.'

The importance of oil to the region's economies can hardly be overstated. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), oil and gas contribute an average 70 percent of government revenue in the six Arab monarchies—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab

Emirates, Qatar and Oman—that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council. The figure for Kuwait is more than 80 percent.

While accumulating vast personal fortunes, Arab rulers in the Gulf generally have been shrewd enough to spend lavishly on schools, hospitals, roads and other projects that benefit their citizenry.

Alarm bells rang in 1994, when a sharp drop in oil prices forced Saudi Arabia to cut wheat subsidies, contributing to a rare bout of political unrest that culminated in the arrest of several fundamentalist clerics and hundreds of their supporters. Even as oil prices bounced back, domestic critics in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have accused their leaders of squandering billions on arms, mostly from the United States.

Chastened by their experience of 1994, rulers in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states generally have acted with restraint, avoiding new spending commitments while using excess revenues to pay off debt to contractors and other creditors. What they did not do, however, was take advantage of higher oil revenue in 1995 and '96 to initiate the kinds of far-reaching structural reforms advocated by the World Bank and IMF.

'When oil prices went up to \$22 a barrel, the Saudis were saying, 'Okay, problem solved,' said Kenneth Kaufman, a specialist on Gulf security at the Congressional Research Service. 'If they had

said, 'This is a windfall, but we're still going to restructure anyway,' they would have been in a much better position.'

But the latest dip in oil prices has only reinforced the message that Gulf states can no longer afford to coddle their citizens with generous subsidies and guaranteed—if often meaningless—government jobs. Among other things, they simply cannot keep pace with population growth, now running at more

than 3 percent in Saudi Arabia, for example.

'You talk to Kuwaitis and they all know what they need to do,' a diplomat here said. 'But it's a case of the dynamics of this society. It's like a family where everybody's sort of agreeing that this is the car they want but they just keep walking around it and kicking the tires.'

LA Times Washington Post News Service

Hong Kong announces economic revival plan

By Keith B. Richburg

HONG KONG—Conceding that the Asian economic crisis has had a more severe impact here than first expected, Hong Kong's leaders Monday said the territory was heading into a recession, and they unveiled a stimulus package aimed at reviving the economy and stemming a huge downward slide in property prices.

Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, who announced the stimulus package in a television address to the territory's 7 million residents, said the regional economic meltdown that began a year ago has proven 'more devastating than anything we had known before.'

'The effects of the turmoil are more serious and far-reaching than we have anticipated,' Tung said. He cited high interest rates, a debilitating credit crunch, the highest unemployment rate in 15 years, collapsing stock and property markets and a tourist industry he said was 'shrinking.'

All Hong Kong assets have been devalued and shrunk to a large extent within a few months,' Tung said in his most somber assessment yet of the territory's economic straits. 'Every sign points to the fact that negative economic growth will likely continue in the second quarter. The unemployment rate will probably continue to rise, and the economic situation for the second half of the year is hardly optimistic.'

Tung's bleak analysis, and the announcement of the stimulus package, was yet another sign of the depth and severity of the regionwide meltdown. Once touted as a 'miracle' model of growth and development, East Asia has in 12 months come to be identified as a region with millions of newly unemployed people, bankrupt banks, piles of bad debt and a fraying social fabric.

Hong Kong was once thought to be an island of financial stability amid the regional turmoil. Its currency is firmly pegged to the US dollar, so the territory avoided the round of devaluations that swept through Asia last year. Its banks are generally considered healthier than

elsewhere. And its now-departed British colonialists left behind an effective legal system and a professional civil service that have largely spared Hong Kong from the problems of corruption and nepotism that are common across the region.

On Monday, however, Tung conceded that some of the current problems 'can also be attributed to the internal factors in our own economy.' He said the spiraling land prices, high wages and high inflation of recent years had created a 'bubble economy.'

The bubble, particularly in the property sector, made Hong Kong the most expensive city in the world, surpassing even high-priced Tokyo by some estimates. But since the Asian crisis found its way here earlier this year, it seems the bubble finally has burst.

Property prices have fallen an average of 40 percent—leaving apartments here still priced astronomically high by world standards but much lower than the level of one year ago. Many people who made down payments on \$1 million apartments now find the value of those units has fallen so low, and interest rates have risen so high, that they can no longer afford their hefty mortgage payments.

The fall in property prices also is dragging down the Hong Kong stock market, because the blue chip Hang Seng index is weighted heavily toward property companies.

'Over a period of six months, a fall of

that kind is traumatic,' said Sir Donald Tsang, the financial secretary. 'It's affecting daily life.'

To help stem the fall and shore up the market, the government is taking the unprecedented step of suspending its own land sales until next March. Auctioning off costly land to developers is a key revenue-casser for the government, but holding onto land now can help keep the land supply restricted and bolster prices. Tsang told reporters that this marked the first time he was aware of that government land sales had been suspended.

Calling property a 'precious commodity,' Tsang defended the unusual intervention, saying it was not intended to shore up property prices for big developers but to help stabilize the market.

'We do not want our land disposal program to aggravate the fall in property prices,' Tsang said. 'What we are trying to do, in fact, is stabilize the market, restore people's confidence.'

Other measures announced Monday include more government loan guarantees to small and medium-sized exporters, more loans for first-time home buyers, a property tax rebate and a 30 percent cut in the tax on diesel fuel to help taxi and bus drivers. Tung also announced that he and more than 300 other top civil servants will forgo any pay increase this year.

LA Times Washington Post News Service

MARKET WATCH 20-23 JUNE

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

| SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gulf Insurance United Engineering United Financial Investment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Investment International Ceramic Industry Jordan Gulf Insurance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miscellaneous Middle East Hotels Zam Investments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JIMCO Zam Investments Philadelphia Insurance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMCO Plastic Industry Light Press | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Plastic Al-Ahliya Industry United Cigarettes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al-Ahliya Trade Center Al-Lahia Industry Al-Ahli Investment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Tobacco Al-Ahliya Trade Center Jordan Trade Center |
| General Price Pointer: 171,090 | 170,378 | 168,799 | 167,280 |
| Trade Volume: 113,823 | 101,942 | 99,142 | 80,936 |
| Stock Volume: 61,512 | 63,293 | 23,798 | 46,932 |
| Highest Traded Stocks: | | | |
| Arab bank: 432115 | Jordan Kuwait Bank: 189788 | Arab Bank: 428165 | Arab Bank: 428335 |

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646688 Fax: 646949

The **Star** <http://star.arabia.com>

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Online

Hindu-Muslim tensions high at hybrid mosque

By Dele Olojede

VARANASI, INDIA: The Great Mosque in this holy Hindu city by the Ganges River is a hybrid structure. Its domes, white-washed frontage has been built in the classic tower-framed style of Islam's holy places; but its rear carries the unmistakable marks of a Hindu temple, with carvings of Ganesha, Krishna and Vishnu.

A thousand rifle-bearing police stand guard. Their duty is to prevent Hindu fundamentalists, who form the backbone of India's Bharatiya Janata Party, from demolishing the mosque, which was built 200 years ago on the site of one of Hinduism's holiest temples.

Like the Hindu fundamentalists who stormed this temple in 1996 hoping to destroy it, the BJP has sought for years to knock down the pillars of the secular state and end laws perceived to grant special privileges to Muslims and other minorities.

Riding the rising passions of Hindu nationalism, the BJP was elected India's ruling party in February. The assertive new government stunned the world last month by conducting underground nuclear tests and declaring India a nuclear-weapon state.

With the long-ruling Congress party fragmented and scandal-ridden and other parties too weak and enfeebled, decades of pro-Hindu and anti-Muslim agitation had finally paid off for the BJP.

Many were drawn to its clear agenda and sense of purpose after years of national prevarication and drift. The party leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a popular moderate, became the movement's acceptable public face. Though as prime minister Vajpayee has toned down some of the more inflammatory policies that have alienated many of India's 105 million Muslims, the government has projected a new assertiveness that some fear will lead to regional instability and heightened internal tensions.

"The BJP is an entirely nationalistic party that was able to gain victory partly by making these chauvinistic statements

and clearly they are willing to take the heat," said John Wilson Lewis of the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University.

By conducting the nuclear tests, appearing to stand up to China and defying American importuning, the BJP has unleashed a wave of national pride, if not nationalistic fervor, among the overwhelm-

sides died in orgies of violence. Gandhi himself was assassinated by a Hindu fundamentalist who felt he had been too accommodating toward Muslims.

Taking a break from dispensing wisdom to his followers at his home here, the imam of the fortified Great Mosque, Badre-Ajam Qureshi, bitterly criticized the BJP, saying it is "an opportunistic kind of party and, to achieve its aims, it will do anything."

"After independence, where I feel the fault lies is that our government did not teach people how to live in a secular state," the imam said. "The government itself has not abided by secularism and in fact has instigated people against it. Because of that, there is trouble in the land."

The battling over holy places is not new. In their most flagrant strike, Hindu fundamentalists destroyed a mosque in the north Indian town of Ayodhya on Dec. 6, 1992, sparking nationwide riots in which more than 3,000 people, most of them Muslims, died. They claimed the mosque stood in the birthplace of Ram, the Hindu god-king, and they are now carving stones to erect a temple in its stead.

That ongoing crusade also targeted the Great Mosque, and on Aug. 5, 1996, more than 50,000 Hindu nationalists converged here to perform what they euphemistically described as an ablation.

Since then, police have effectively turned the mosque into an armed camp, maintaining around-the-clock guard from nearby rooftops and sleeping in tents within the grounds. The mosque was also fortified with a 10-foot steel fence, topped by concertina wire. Everyone going through alleyways in the immediate vicinity is frisked.

"As a Hindu, I don't want the mosque here," said Rameshwar Tiwari, a pundit at the Vishwanath Temple, which was razed to make way for the mosque but was rebuilt right next to it in 1780. "It is not just me that wants the mosque demolished. The entire Hindu people wish it to be so. It was a temple a long time ago, before the Muslim invaders came and tore it down."

Many Muslims, knowing they are outnumbered and, when trouble flares, outgunned, have bunkered down for a long and uncomfortable spell in BJP's India.

"By the grace of Allah, Muslims always win," said Abdul Jabar, 47, whose curio shop abuts the Great Mosque. "It is just a political problem, not a religious one." Just steps away, where he sells marble sculptures of Hindu gods, Ashok Gaur declared his support for the BJP but offers that perhaps seeking to demolish mosques may have gone too far.

"The mosque should remain where it is; there will just be more trouble, more riots, more tension," he said. "This is the only point where the BJP is not right. They are right on everything else."

LA Times-Washington Post Service



Abdul Jabar, 47, left, at his shop in Varanasi, India. Photo by Dele Olojede.

By Stewart Dalby

LIKE MANY westerners who have settled in Cambodia, Michael Hayes, the 46-year-old American publisher and editor-in-chief of the English language fortnightly, the Phnom Penh Post, first saw the country as a backpacker.

That was in 1974 and not the best time to visit. The war between the American-backed regime of Lon Nol and the murderous Khmer Rouge was at its height and the fabric of society was falling apart. He nevertheless found the country sufficiently beguiling to want to return.

It was almost 20 years, 1991, before he went back. Having graduated from Georgetown University in Washington with a masters degree in international relations. He worked for an oil company in Texas then found himself to the world of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"I had what I describe as a chequered career with NGOs. In 1991, I was in Thailand having worked for the Asia Foundation for more than seven years, and discovered my contract was not going to be renewed," he says.

Hayes decided to travel to Phnom Penh with his wife Kathleen. "I found there was no English language newspaper in the Cambodian capital. There was one or more in most Asian capitals, so I was looking for something to do, so I thought I would start a newspaper," he says.

History of the Phnom Penh Post

It is the dream of many a journalist to start their own paper, but Hayes had never been a journalist. He had been media co-ordinator with the Asia Foundation. He fancied the idea of writing, though, and reckoned the time was right.

He was right in one sense. The peace accords of 1991 envisaged a western-style election in 1993, to be organized by the United Nations. The UN's coming to town seemed like a gold rush; there were 26,000 officials and troops. There was lots of money around, more tourists, new bars and restaurants, plenty of investment, or so it seemed.

There were also good stories; the Khmer Rouge were still fighting in the hills. There was the election itself and the rivalry between Hun Sen, the strong man imposed by the Vietnamese, and the royal family was always good for a story. But, more to the point, there was also a liberal investment regime, low taxes and easy permits for foreigners. And, while the UN was around, no harsh censorship.

In another sense, it was not a good

time. The Khmer Rouge had wiped out the intelligentsia of Cambodia. Hayes says: "I found myself going from office to office not finding anyone to deal with. It is amazing looking back. There seemed to be no civil service at all. Finally, I wrote to King Sihanouk who was then back in town, reigning but not

because of ongoing power shortages. He called on old friends. One, an Apple specialist from San Francisco, helped with production. Some respected local journalists like Nate Thayer and Leo Dobbs contributed articles for nothing. Other international journalists contributed money.

"I draw satisfaction from visiting journalists and academics telling me it is a good paper. It's a little bit of history. If I had not started the paper, it would not exist."

Michael Hayes, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

ruling, and got his official backing."

He did not receive any financial assistance, though. Hayes founded the newspaper with his life savings of \$50,000. Most of the initial money went on machinery, AppleMac computers and laser printers. He had to put down a premium of \$10,000 to rent the house where he still lives above the shop. He also had to pay \$4,000 for an electric generator

The first edition in July 1992 broke even. The next six issues of the fortnightly publication made a loss. Hereafter, until the bloody coup by second prime minister Hun Sen against the king, the minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh in July 1997, the newspaper broke even.

It was, and is, a shoe-string operation. Turnover is \$20,000 a month. Revenues are 90 per cent from advertising; 35 per

cent of which are classified. The print run is 4,500 copies, of which around 300 are returned. There are 800 subscribers worldwide, important because they pay up-front.

With a \$20,000 monthly turnover, Hayes is responsible for 20 people. His wife, Kathleen, from whom he is now separated, remains as managing director.

His wage bill comes to \$38,000, although he himself has never taken a salary. He puts in his expenses. Phnom Penh has always been a 'rucksack' journalists' town. These days, international newspapers do not base correspondents there, and he employs people from a constant flow of young westerners wanting to work in journalism.

Hayes also trains Khmer as newspapermen and women.

Has it been worth it? He says: "I draw satisfaction from visiting journalists and academics telling me it is a good paper. It's a little bit of history. If I had not started the paper, it would not exist."

His coverage ranges from reports of the death of Pol Pot, to analysis of the political situation, and learned environ-

mental articles, particularly on logging and the effects of damming the Mekong River. Above all, it is non-partisan; it is not easy in Asia to run a free, critical operation. Remarkably, Hayes has only been in trouble with the authorities once. Though he looked likely to receive a jail term, the matter was settled before coming to court.

Still, he is not getting rich and he would like to take a break. "The coup last July was a watershed. The business atmosphere turned sour, tourists stopped arriving, investment slowed. The paper has no debt to speak of, but it is no longer breaking even," he says.

Hayes has thought of taking in partners, but they always wanted a majority stake and for him to stay on as publisher, when he preferred to keep it his own business. He is now trying to raise \$220,000, in the form of a grant, through international organisations such as the Open Societies Institute, the European Union and a variety of NGOs. At the back of his mind, though, is the thought that if Hun Sen wins the election scheduled for next month, the paper would be closed down. "That would be a pity," he says.

(The Phnom Penh Post, PO Box 12-1074, Soi Suan Phu Post Office, 10121 Bangkok, Thailand
E-mail: pppost@worldmail.com.kh)

Financial Times Syndication

A web site on trepanation



WERNERSVILLE, Pa.—This spring, Peter Halvorsen and Tom Wargo appeared on Howard Stern's radio program, perhaps the media outlet where they would be ensured the most ridicule of trepanation. Halvorsen tried to explain complicated biological processes, but Stern called him "insane." Still, they accomplished their goal: Their Web site (<http://www.trepan.com>) received 15,000 hits in the two hours after the program aired.

A dumpful of peace and opportunity in El Salvador

By Serge F. Kovaleski

NEJAPA, EL SALVADOR: It may be perplexing that Francisco Alberto Chavez and his wife Susana have taken a liking to where they live, given that it is a wasteland of fetid trash, sandstorms that sting the skin and swarming vultures that scavenge for scraps.

Yet, for the Chavezes, the large Nejapa garbage dump symbolizes something completely different opportunity, which they have not been able to find anywhere else in this poor Central American country.

They moved to the junk heap, on the outskirts of the capital city, San Salvador, several years ago to live off the land, so to speak, scavenging mostly pieces of plastic, which they wash, cut and sell to local recycling companies. The Chavezes and their five children live in a shack made of wood and tin, a virtual bunker buzzing with flies amid the mounds of refuse.

"We enjoy this kind of life, and we are used to it. I like being surrounded by garbage," said Susana, 53. "The children were born among the garbage, and they are being raised among the garbage. There are times when we get off a bus and people say, 'There go the dirty people.' But I do not care what society has to say because this is the source of our work."

The Chavezes, who earn about \$100 a month, are one of four dozen families who have built a shantytown alongside the Nejapa dump, where they eke out an existence gleaning anything of value from the piles of rubbish that are trucked from the capital and surrounding communities.

Although the squalor is overwhelming, many of the residents say they have become inured to the filth and the intestinal and respiratory illnesses that are the consequences of living within 50 yards of El Salvador's biggest garbage heap. Some of them say their way of life is a trade-off for a chance to earn money and live away from the violence and other dangers found on city streets.

While the Nejapa dump provides a poignant snapshot of the resilience of the human spirit, it also underscores the myriad economic and social problems with which this nation of 6 million people continues to grapple more than five years after peace accords ended a grinding civil war that claimed 70,000 lives.

El Salvador is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Here, the economic disparity between a small wealthy elite and the rest of the population remains enormous despite the influx of more than \$1 billion a year in remittances from Salvadorans living in the United States.

Furthermore, it is home to one of the world's most violent societies—violence driven largely by the prevalence of street gangs, drugs and firearms left over from 12 years of war.

But for all its unsavoryness—and in part because of that and the fact that people living here own few things of monetary value—the Nejapa dump is a place with little or no crime.

"I have found some tranquility here," said Maria Isabel Garcia, 55, who moved to the dump two years ago after living a nomadic, destitute life in San Salvador. She also earns money selling plastic to a local manufacturing firm.

The day's work begins at about 8 a.m. when the garbage trucks start rolling in, drawing not only the families who reside here, but hundreds of other poor people from the area in what becomes a competitive scramble to pluck the best of the pickings.



Susana and Francisco Alberto Chavez work in their home next to the dump in San Salvador. Photo by Serge F. Kovaleski.

Atop a sandy hill where the trash is dumped, throngs of people, many wearing bandanas over their mouths and noses to fend off some of the stench, spend hours rummaging through the piles of garbage, carrying away whatever might bring them some money. But sifting through the trash can also result in grim discoveries, such as human bodies.

On most days, the dump is such a hub of activity that several residents set up refreshment stands where they sell sodas, coffee and snacks. Amid the stray dogs and the flocks of vultures overhead, Santos Angel Castillo, 19, who travels here each day from a nearby town, stood in the withering heat on a recent afternoon chugging a Coke and calculating the value of the pile of cans and copper wiring that he had spent hours accumulating.

"By selling this later today to a factory that makes pots and pans, I should make enough money for food and other essentials, like toilet paper," said Castillo, who estimates that he earns \$5 a day through his labors at the dump. "This is life, and it is not bad for someone like me who has a sixth-grade education. It is not

pretty, but it is a living, and you get used to it."

Most of the residents here use whatever money they make to buy food at a large, outdoor market located between the dump and San Salvador. "All I usually eat is vegetables, rarely meat, because I cannot afford it," said Garcia, who said that severe arthritis limits the amount of work she can do.

Garcia and the others who live next to the dump get their water for drinking and bathing from a municipal tanker truck that regularly stops here. "The fact that they send out a water truck makes us feel like we are a real community and not just squatters living next to garbage," said one resident.

Francisco Chavez, 44, while cutting up some of the plastic he had collected, took a pragmatic view of his family's existence at the dump. "We are aware that we are living in a center of contamination," he said. "But we also realize that we have to work here. This is our living, and we appreciate it."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Let's keep our city clean!

THE HOTEL InterContinental, Jordan, this week organized a clean-up of the area around the hotel. Both management and staff members participated.

The hotel is committed to making Jordan cleaner, by keeping its staff informed of new ways to care for the environment.

The clean-up spree at the hotel is to become a frequent occurrence. Meanwhile, staff will continue to benefit from environmental training sessions. ■



Arab environment through the ages

By Kofi Attah
Special to the Star

Iraqi artist Khleif Mahmoud Khleif has a magnificent ability to express himself and the world around him. This is evident in his exhibition at the Buran gallery for Fine Arts, which he called "Arab Environment". It represents a link between the past and the present. "I draw live on site, as I never use a camera to snap pictures that could be used later as a model to recreate the scene. I believe in realism," he says. Khleif insists on using his artistic skills to capture the moment. His paintings are basically greens, blues, yellows and reds, complemented at times with the careful use of other colours, especially black and white.

On each occasion before he paints, he mixes the primary colours to achieve the middle hues, then he applies the first layer on the canvas. "This is done because the middle hues will not interfere with colours that are added later on," he explained. A good example is "The girl and the shadow", where an innocent looking little girl, set in a red background, is seen peering through a door, which portrays the present and the future. Another painting called the "Old market in Mosul" also represents the present and the past.

Khleif, who is known as one of Iraq's premier Bedouin artists, comes from a conservative Bedouin family in Mosul. He is highly influenced by his Bedouin heritage and village. This shows in his painting entitled "Mosul coffee shop", "A market in Mosul" and "A village in Mosul". According to Khleif, "a good painting is one that is drawn with Jerusalem in mind, or indeed, any painting that can be compared with Jerusalem". He compares Mosul with Jerusalem in the paintings "Old door in Mosul" and "Old door in Jerusalem". "Mosul is very similar to Jerusalem, and the latter is very important and sacred to us," he declared.

During his long career, the 44 year-old artist born in Ninawa, Iraq, has created his own artistic means of communication. His words are water color, market scenes, villages, mosques, Jerusalem, his village, human faces and figures. In addition, flowers, trees and forests depict the Arab environment throughout the ages.

Everything is natural, and one gets the impression that Khleif's life belongs to water colors. He has participated in several solo and collective exhibitions in Baghdad, Amman, Ninawa and Damascus. He has dedicated his most recent exhibition, "Arab environment" (under the patronage of Mamdouh Al Abdali, the mayor of Greater Amman



Municipality), to promoting Arab heritage in general, especially in Iraq and in Mosul in particular.

The works on display take the visitor through Palestine, Jordan and Iraq. In his piece "Singing and dancing," he gives a picture of Jordanian rural folk, and shows how they spend their time, making good use of every moment of the day that Allah has granted them.

He has recently taken up residence in Jordan and now teaches art here. Jordan is therefore, always on his mind and one of the first paintings in the exhibition hall is of a Jordanian shepherd, tenderly carrying a lamb on his shoulders.

Most of the 37 paintings portray market scenes. "To me, the market is a place where you can buy anything and everything. It is a place where the past can be brought back to

life," Khleif said. But the elegance of random beauty, which he finds in nature, also features heavily in his thoughts. He depicts in pieces 28, 29 and 30, flowers, trees and forests, which he puts in shades of red, blue and green.

Khleif views the daily activity of painting as a competition between himself and his artistic muse, and the idea of promoting his Arab heritage as a godly duty. By using water colours tactfully, he is able to play with his passion, dredging both his personal and collective self. He has brought forth pieces of striking originality and emotional complexity.

"The Arab Environment" runs until 30 June, at the Buran gallery for Fine Arts (Sweifya Square, near Boston Fried Chicken, Amman), daily except Friday, from 10 am to 6 pm. ■



Khleif Mahmoud Khleif

SCRAPBOOK

Great advertising goofs!

By Mahmoud Abdel Razek

TACKLING THE international markets is a goal of most growing corporations. It shouldn't be that hard, yet even the big multinationals run into trouble with language and cultural differences. Here are some examples:

The name Coca-Cola in China was first rendered as ke-kou-ke-la. Unfortunately, the company didn't discover until thousands of signs had been printed that the phrase means "bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax," depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 Chinese characters and found a close phonetic equivalent, "ke-kou-ke-le," which can be loosely translated as "happiness in the mouth."

In Taiwan, the translation of the Pepsi slogan "come alive with the Pepsi generation," comes out as "Pepsi will bring your ancestors from the dead."

Also in Chinese, Kentucky Fried Chicken's slogan "finger-lickin' good" came out as "eat your fingers off."

The American slogan for Salem cigarettes "Salem feeling free" got translated for the Japanese market as "when smoking Salem, you feel so refreshed that your mind seems to be free and empty."

When Ford launched the Ford Pinto car in Brazil, it flopped. The company found out that the word "Pinto" was Brazilian slang for "tiny male genitals." Ford prided all the name plates off and renamed it "Corcel", which means horse.

When Parker marketed a ball-point pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to say "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." Instead, the ads proudly proclaimed, "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant!"

An American T-shirt maker in Miami, Florida printed shirts for the Spanish market for the Pope's visit. Instead of the desired "I saw the Pope" in Spanish, the shirts proclaimed "I saw the Potato."

Chicken-man Frank Perdue's slogan, "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken," got terribly mangled in another Spanish translation. A photo of Perdue with one of his birds appeared on the billboards all over Mexico with a caption that explained, "It takes a hard man to make a chicken aroused."

Hurt-Wesson Food-Stuff Co. introduced its "Big John" products in French Canada as "Gros Jos" before finding that the phrase was slang for "Big Breasts."

Japan's second-largest tourist agency, Kinki Nippon Tourist Co., was mystified when it entered English speaking markets and began receiving requests for unusual sex tours. When they found out why, the owners of the company promptly changed the name.

And finally, in Italy, translators came a cropper again when working on the ad campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water. The product was launched as "Schweppes Toilet Water." ■



Every afternoon a super cube dealer would slowly cruise the town looking for "customers."

SLAPSTIX

"Friends may come and go, but enemies accumulate."

AGENDA

Exhibitions

■ At Darat al Funun (Jabal al Weibdeh), an exhibit of graphic and oil works on paper by Tunisian artist Qalder Triki, of work done between 1973 and 1995, will run until June 26.

■ Also at Darat al Funun, a new collection of Contemporary Arab Art will be on display until June 25.

■ "Letters of Clay and Silk," a bonimage to Muhideen Ibo Arabi is an exhibition by Algerian artist Rachid Koraichi that opened at Darat al Funun on June 3. It is held in cooperation with the French Cultural Center.

■ The Fadesa Al Hyrrayiah (Freedom of Space) exhibition is being displayed at Opholley Gallery in Um Uthaina. The venue, which exhibits 100 paintings of Jordanian and Arab artists continues till 30 June.

■ An exhibition of the 3rd anniversary of the establish-

ment of the Hamourabi Gallery continues till 30 July. About 200 exhibits are on display, including ceramics and carvings by Jordanian and Arab artists.

■ Turaathunah: Waqfeh wa Hammam (Archaeology: Reality and Concerns) is an exhibition organized by the Antiquities Dept. It runs till 12 July at the Department.

■ "The Salt Collection of pottery, tiles, mosaics, fabrics, linens, tablecloths etc., runs till 25 June. It is organized under the patronage of Queen Noor by the Jordan Design and Trade Center and the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. The exhibition is at the Center, off Wadi Samra Street, between the King Abdallah Gardens and Safeway—2nd right after the gas station.

■ "100 years of Cuban painting" is an exhibit that starts at the Cervantes Institute on 28 June. It ends on 15 July.



Marcel Khalifeh

By a Star Staff Writer

People's excitement about the World Cup will very probably tip into the first half of the month of August, as the Jerash Festival concludes another fun year of art and culture.

As usual Jerash kicks off with a bang. Lebanese singer Diana Haddad will sway the audiences with her magical voice for three nights in a row. She will give three concerts, starting on Thursday 23 July.

Diana Haddad is likely to prove a successful choice, being a big hit with audiences. Diana is a relatively new singer, having only begun her career in the 90s. Some of the top artists in the Arab world will be performing at the festival, which ends 7 August. Diana, however, is likely to be a real crowd puller.

Marcel Khalifeh, another Lebanese singer is singing again in Jerash after a long absence. Beginning on 28 July, Khalifeh will also give three concerts at Jerash's South Theater.

Khalifeh is a well-known and established artist who has been in the profession since the 1970s. His songs border on humanism and nationalism, two themes which have proved very popular with Arab audiences.

These themes have not changed. They continue to linger on, but today the artist is very much associated with being the force behind the modern Arab song.

Following that, Ilias Karam will entertain audiences in another two concerts beginning 30 July. Ilias Karam is another popular singer with the Jordanian public, appealing mostly to a slightly older audience, not middle aged, nor the youth, but for the people aged somewhere in the middle. He is widely known for his Mawweel, distinctive vocal chords, historically associated with the people of this region.

However, the real star of the show is the up and coming Saudi singer Abdel Majeed Abdallah. Although relatively new, this singer has been able to gain wide appeal, not only in his own country, but throughout the



Abdel Majeed Abdallah

Gulf states, and in this region. His latest song "Ya Tayeb Al Qalb" is hugely successful. His concerts begin on 3 August. In addition to these big names, Jerash '98 will host 70 groups and theater acts, not to mention poetry recitals that have become



Diana Haddad

very much a part of Jerash line-up: As usual, groups from the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia, Spain, Britain, Norway and Poland will be taking part. The Festival ends on 7 August. ■

Air France is also launching daily direct return flights between Paris and Atlanta and Paris and Boston.

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Des caméras vidéo à Jérusalem : la dernière provocation de Netanyahu
 Israël a adopté cette semaine un plan de surveillance de la vieille ville de Jérusalem annexée, à l'aide de caméras vidéo et autres appareils électroniques. Ce plan prévoit l'installation de caméras dans les rues de la vieille ville notamment dans le quartier musulman, où deux colons israéliens résident dans le secteur ont été tués depuis six mois. Les dizaines de caméras pivotantes reliées à un central de surveillance seront même capables de prendre des vues de nuit. « Il s'agit d'éviter toute atteinte à notre souveraineté dans la partie orientale de Jérusalem et de renforcer de façon immédiate la présence et l'efficacité de la police », a précisé le ministre de la sécurité intérieure. Une nouvelle provocation qui s'ajoute à l'adoption deux jours plus tôt par le gouvernement de Benjamin Netanyahu (notre photo) d'un plan de « Grand Jérusalem ». Ce projet prévoit la création d'une super-municipalité couvrant toute la périphérie de Jérusalem et englobant des colonies de Cisjordanie. Le plan vise notamment à renforcer la majorité juive et donc le contrôle israélien sur la ville disputée, dont la population palestinienne (environ 30% du total) augmente relativement plus vite que l'israélienne. De leur côté, les Palestiniens y voient une volonté de préparer l'annexion des colonies juives situées dans la périphérie de Jérusalem, qui compte des dizaines de milliers de colons. La super-municipalité prévoyait d'ailleurs pas les localités de Cisjordanie situées dans la banlieue de Jérusalem-est. Ce plan a été condamné par l'ensemble de la communauté internationale.



Éclaboussures

Supprimez le tawjihi !

Encore quelques jours, et des dizaines de milliers de jeunes Jordaniens vont pouvoir laisser échapper un grand « ouf » de soulagement à la fin de leur dernier examen. Depuis des semaines, même des mois, l'état d'urgence a été décrété dans quelque 90.000 foyers. Un climat d'inquiétude et de tension qui va se prolonger jusqu'au 24 juillet à l'annonce des résultats. Cette année, le Mondial a encore compliqué les choses tant pour les familles que pour les élèves, tentés par les images du ballon rond.

Cette ambiance malsaine revient chaque année. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'on fait du tawjihi, un monstre auquel il est difficile d'échapper. Les jeunes ont appris que leur avenir en dépendait. Une moyenne élevée au tawjihi est capitale pour espérer une place à l'université. Depuis très longtemps, on s'imagine que le diplôme universitaire est le visa d'entrée indispensable pour une vie professionnelle réussie : « Tu seras docteur en ingénierie, mon fils ! ». La conscience populaire n'a pas tout à fait tort mais elle a besoin d'être mise à la page. Il y a trente ans, la Jordanie était un pays pauvre avec une agriculture archaïque comme principale activité économique. Faire, des études supérieures était alors le moyen le plus accessible pour réaliser sa promotion sociale. Résultat : nous avons aujourd'hui de nombreux universitaires qui souffrent du chômage. Il y a dix ans, les pouvoirs publics ont voulu contraindre les jeunes à ne plus s'orienter vers la fac mais plutôt vers des formations techniques. Ce plan n'a pas marché pour deux raisons :

1. Les salaires accordés aux diplômés des « collèges des communautés », comme on les appelle, sont dérisoires. Cela a renforcé la conviction des étudiants que seules les études supérieures sont crédibles. Par ailleurs, ceux qui sont sortis de ces formations n'ont pas été épargnés non plus par le chômage. À tel point qu'aujourd'hui on envisage leur fermeture ou leur intégration à des universités privées.

2. Il existe une politique « non déclarée » de l'État qui continue de privilégier le cursus universitaire. Cela consiste à réserver des heures et 60% des places à la fac à certaines catégories de personnes : enfants de militaires, d'enseignants, de martyrs, de policiers etc... Dans cette situation de concurrence inégale, pour ceux qui n'ont pas la chance d'être pistonnés, avoir une moyenne élevée au tawjihi devient un impératif, un cauchemar.

Le système éducatif actuel a prouvé suffisamment son échec. Il est temps de le revoir entièrement. Pourquoi ne pas supprimer le tawjihi (l'équivalent du baccalauréat français) comme le proposent déjà d'innombrables pédagogues. L'examen ordinaire à la fin de l'année scolaire donnerait tout aussi bien une idée du niveau du lycéen. Il s'agit aussi d'établir une égalité des chances entre tous les élèves et de valoriser le travail manuel pour en finir avec cette obsession de l'arabe derrière un bureau. Mais la solution radicale est en fait ailleurs. Il n'y a pas d'enseignement dissocié de la réalité économique et sociale. Que peuvent, dès lors, espérer les jeunes dans un pays rongé par le chômage ?

Suleiman Sweiss

Liberté de la presse

Les meilleures années sont derrière nous

La nouvelle loi, discutée en ce moment par les députés, a suscité une vague générale de protestations. En cas de vote favorable, elle deviendrait l'une des plus draconiennes dans l'histoire de la presse jordanienne.

En 1920, l'émir Abdallah (futur roi et fondateur du royaume) débarque à Ma'an et publie le premier journal de Transjordanie *Al-Haq Ya'lou* (Le droit prévaut). Puis entre 1923 et 1928, le jeune émir se dote d'un journal officiel, *Al-Charg al-arabi* (l'Orient arabe), consacré surtout à la publication des lois mais s'autorisant parfois un ou deux articles linéaires.

Les années suivantes sont marquées par une profusion de publications qui disparaissent presque aussitôt vite qu'elles sont nées sous le coup d'une interdiction temporaire ou définitive - en particulier les supports papiers de partis politiques - ou pour des raisons matérielles.

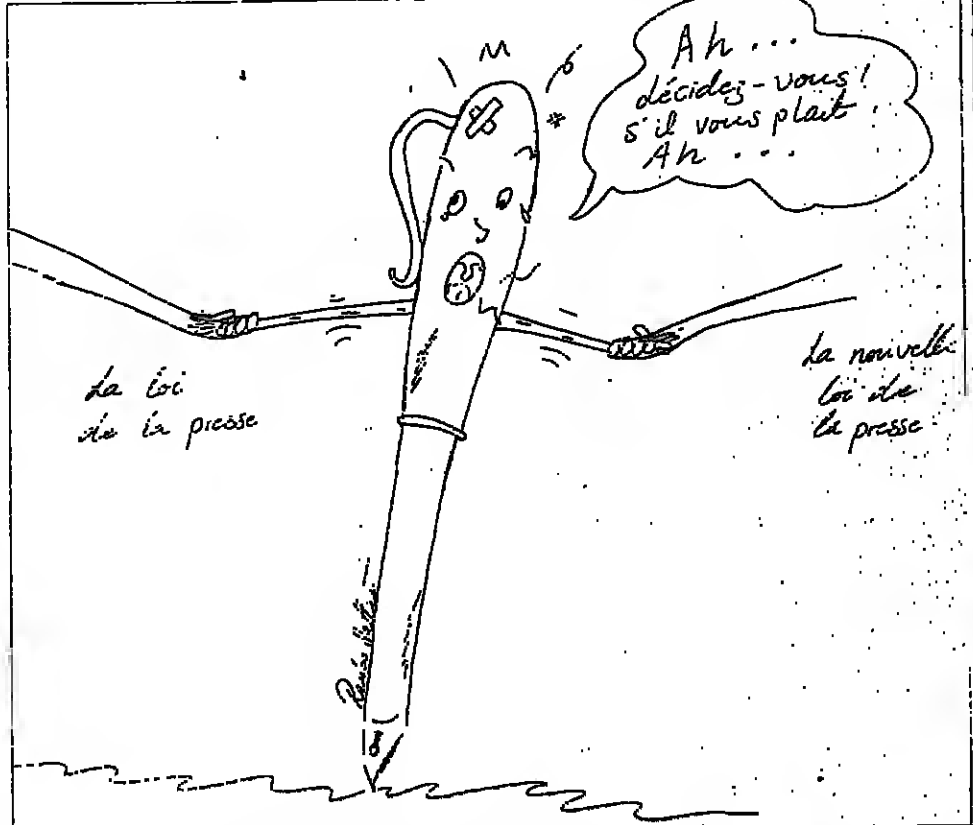
En fait, jusqu'en 1967, la presse a du mal à se développer. La Jordanie n'est encore à l'époque qu'une société arriérée économiquement aux médias, peu convaincants. La radio vient à peine de faire son apparition et les quotidiens, réduits à quatre pages, ressemblent davantage à des petites entreprises individuelles. Quant aux sources d'informations, elles viennent principalement des agences internationales et des radios. Peu de reportages et de publicités dans des journaux qui ne coûtent que 15 fils et qui la plupart du temps sont acquis à la cause gouvernementale. Difficile d'y trouver en effet un point de vue critique.

En février 1967, le pouvoir exécutif décide de réorganiser la presse. On veut en finir avec les micro-entreprises et créer des grands groupes de presse dignes de ce nom. Deux quotidiens sont ainsi fusionnés pour former le *Doustour* et deux autres pour constituer *Al-Quds* à

Jérusalem. L'occupation de la Ville Sainte par l'armée israélienne, quelques mois plus tard, laisse le *Doustour* en situation de monopole en Jordanie. Le gouvernement décide d'y mettre fin rapidement en aidant à la création d'un autre quotidien *Al-Rai*. Bien qu'indésirable, cette intervention était nécessaire, car, malgré un niveau de richesse suffisant, le secteur privé hésitait encore à investir dans la presse. À la lumière des troubles politiques du moment. Cette période de « chaos » (1968-1971), pendant laquelle la résistance palestinienne avait installé ses quartiers généraux à Amman, fut pourtant l'une des plus fastes pour la liberté de la presse. Légales ou non, les diverses publications attaquaient le gouvernement et le régime sans craindre quoi que ce soit.

Prison ou pauvreté

Mais ce « laisser-aller » ne dure qu'un temps. Après Septembre noir, les autorités jordaniennes reprennent les choses en main. Une loi est promulguée en 1973 (en l'absence de Parlement), renforcée cinq ans plus tard par une série d'amendements. Le pays vit alors sous le régime des lois martiales et de l'état d'urgence. La presse n'échappe pas à la règle. Elle est soumise aussi à de nombreuses restrictions et interventions du gouvernement militaire général (c'est-à-dire le Premier ministre) et de ses adjoints. Empêcher tel ou tel journaliste d'écrire, pratiquer la censure, imposer des licenciements, menacer voire arrêter des journalistes, autant d'intimidations quasi quotidiennes. Un écrivain jordanien caractérisait ainsi ces années



noires : « Un vrai intellectuel a le choix entre la prison ou... la pauvreté ».

Avec l'abrogation des lois martiales et l'entrée du pays dans un « processus démocratique » au début des années 90, il a fallu remettre à jour la loi sur les publications. Ce fut fait en 1993. Ce nouveau texte, adopté par le Parlement et toujours en vigueur aujourd'hui, laisse une relative liberté d'expression aux journalistes. Une marge de manœuvre qui

semble déplaire au pouvoir. Au cours des cinq dernières années, le gouvernement a attaqué les gens de la presse en Justice près de soixante fois. Les tribunaux ne lui ont donné raison qu'à trois reprises. Les dirigeants ont alors inventé des amendements (mai 1997) pour faire taire des journaux jugés trop libéraux. En vain, leur initiative a été purement et simplement annulée par la Haute Cour de Justice en janvier dernier pour « violation de la Constitu-

tion ». Le gouvernement revient à la charge avec sa loi 1998 qui, si elle était adoptée en l'état, renforcerait « les interdits, les restrictions et les sanctions » qui existaient dans les textes précédents. De quoi raviver de vieux démons. À titre de comparaison, une étude datée de 1996 faisait de la loi de 1955, la première, « la moins répressive » dans l'histoire de la presse jordanienne. ■

Suleiman Sweiss

Exposition

Les jarres sauvées des eaux

Les poteries de l'Algérien Rachid Koraichi sont encore à Darat al Funun jusqu'au 2 juillet. Une exposition itinérante, issue d'une renaissance.



Rachid Koraichi, le calligraphe barbu, présente son œuvre imposante.

Corinne Maeght, commissaire de l'exposition, raconte l'histoire des œuvres de Koraichi. Tout commence en avril 1995, Grenade, qui s'apprête à ouvrir un Musée des pièces archéologiques du palais de l'Alhambra. Invite Rachid Koraichi et d'autres artistes à participer aux festivités. Il est notamment prévu d'envoyer en septembre de la même année un ensemble de ces pièces archéologiques et œuvres contemporaines pour une exposition à Berlin.

Koraichi, la cinquantaine, s'embarque alors pour Djerba. Sur cette île tunisienne fréquentée en son temps par Scipion l'Africain, les potiers travaillent depuis le temps des guerres puniques sur des pièces énormes dans des ateliers séculaires. Sur place, l'artiste algérien adopte la technique tradi-

tionnelle (tour et four artisanaux) de ses hôtes pour façonner... des jarres. Objet cher à des potiers tunisiens, objet singulier choisi par Koraichi en rappel de la première pièce trouvée pendant les fouilles archéologiques de l'Alhambra : la Jarre aux Gazelles, un exemplaire des jarres utilisées par les marins arabes pour conserver la nourriture et qui marque leur arrivée sur les rives andalouses.

Après plusieurs mois de travail, les 21 jarres d'un mètre quarante chacune sont prêtes à être envoyées. Mais Koraichi a introduit une modification dans le travail des potiers tunisiens qui avaient l'habitude d'émailler leurs œuvres avec de l'oxyde de plomb. Le peintre leur a montré qu'il était possible de continuer à émailler en utilisant des substituants chimiques moins nocifs pour leur santé.

Technique du raku
 Voilà donc les jarres placées dans les fours immenses, vieux de plus de 2000 ans, pour la dernière étape. Mais, une nuit du mois de septembre 95, la région asséchée de Djerba est victime d'inondations cataclysmiques. Koraichi est réveillé par le vacarme du tonnerre. Il se précipite vers l'atelier et les fours pour sauver ce qu'il peut. Il est déjà trop tard. Les bâtiments sont effondrés, les jarres détruites. C'est tout simplement grâce à son agent, Corinne Maeght, que Rachid Koraichi reprend

son travail anéanti en une nuit à Djerba. Cette fois, il est dans le sud de la France à Anduze. Le Conseil général du Gard finance sa résidence. Il travaille d'abord dans l'atelier Patrick Galt où il crée 21 plats carrés, puis dans celui de Gisèle Butthod-Garon où il termine 7 plats ronds selon la technique japonaise du raku. Cette technique consiste à plonger les céramiques dans des fours très chauds (environ 900 degrés). Sous l'effet de la température, les couleurs des plats se mélangent. Koraichi a aussi imaginé des jarres qui ne ressemblent pas à celles perdues à Djerba. Il s'agit ici d'« olives », c'est-à-dire des vases traditionnels français où les gens conservaient des olives et autres aliments.

Sur ses poteries, le peintre algérien s'est laissé inspirer par les écrits mystiques, philosophiques et empreints de tolérance d'Ibn Arabi qui vécut au XIII^e siècle. On trouve ainsi très clairement une combinaison de croix chrétiennes et de phrases islamiques sur les plats carrés. Au total, l'œuvre terminée en France est tout à fait singulière. « L'environnement où je travaille m'influence », explique le calligraphe qui ne s'est donc pas contenté de reproduire les jarres de Djerba, avant d'ajouter : « Et puis ce n'est pas créatif d'imiter les anciennes œuvres ».

Maha El-Metwally

L'exposition de Koraichi suit presque le parcours des aventuriers arabes Ibn Arabi et Scipion l'Africain mais en sens inverse. Ils sont partis de Grenade, Rachid Koraichi a fait de Grenade son ultime étape. Présentés à Damas, Bagdad et maintenant Amman, les jarres s'envoleront ensuite pour Ramallah, la France, la Tunisie, l'Algérie et le Maroc avant de rejoindre l'Espagne. L'exposition est à Darat al Funun jusqu'au 2 juillet. Entrée libre. Renseignements au Centre culturel français.

Sport et politique

L'Iran prêt pour le bouquet final

L'enjeu de la rencontre Iran-États-Unis était surtout politique. Mais avec la victoire de la République islamiste, le sport reprend ses droits. Les Iraniens se prennent à rêver d'une qualification en huitièmes si, ce soir, ils s'imposent face à l'Allemagne.

Les deux équipes posent pour la photo officielle, en prenant soin d'intercaler un joueur de chaque camp. Les Américains sont facilement reconnaissables : ils tiennent un bouquet de fleurs à la main qui vient de leur être offert par les joueurs iraniens. Une fois tirée, l'image est saisissante : deux pays en froid depuis une vingtaine d'années décident de faire d'un match de football le début d'une nouvelle ère diplomatique. Car cette photo n'initie pas seulement le rapprochement entre les deux pays, elle le concrétise aux yeux du monde, à l'occasion de l'événement le plus médiatique du siècle. Certes le destin a un peu aidé ces deux pays : en décembre dernier, le hasard du tirage au sort les plaçait dans le même groupe.

L'Iran savait dès lors qu'elle devrait se préparer à affronter le Grand Satan dont elle a si souvent souhaité l'annihilation. Le premier à avoir eu le courage d'affronter les Américains a été le président iranien lui-même, Mohammad Khatami, un modéré élu en mai 1997. Au début de l'année, il accordait une interview à CNN dans laquelle il prônait la conciliation. C'est avec le sport que les États-Unis répondent à son appel. Après la diplomatie du ping-pong dans les années 70 avec la Chine, ils choisissent la lutte, en envoyant une délégation de sportifs à Téhéran en février. Pour la première fois depuis 1980, le drapeau américain est applaudi, lui qui a si souvent été brûlé ou foulé aux pieds dans les rues de la capitale iranienne.

Tous les ingrédients étaient donc réunis pour que la rencontre de football se déroule dans les meilleures conditions. Le dernier coup de pouce américain a permis d'en faire un triomphe. Trois jours avant le match, le secrétaire d'État



Des fleurs avant le match, pour leurs adversaires américains. Les Iraniens ont mérité la palme du fair-play.

américain Madeleine Albright faisait à l'Iran une proposition spectaculaire en vue d'une normalisation de leurs relations, sachant ainsi les efforts d'ouverture du président Khatami.

Simplex figurants ?

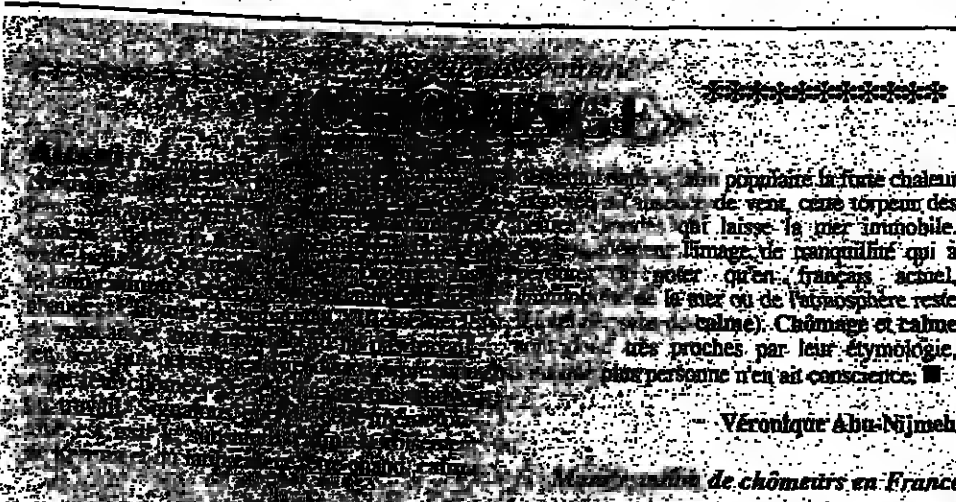
Les considérations politiques l'emportent désormais nettement sur l'enjeu sportif, d'ailleurs de peu d'intérêt dans un groupe dominé par la Yougoslavie et l'Allemagne. Une polémique a même éclaté à propos de la diffusion par une chaîne française du film *Jamais sans ma fille* qui raconte les tentatives d'une femme pour fuir l'Iran avec sa fille. L'Ambassade d'Iran en France a demandé à la chaîne M6 de renoncer à diffuser le film pendant le Mondial, sous prétexte

que l'intrigue était douteuse. Devant le refus français, les Iraniens firent courir le bruit selon lequel l'équipe nationale pourrait quitter la compétition en signe de protestation.

Un tel geste aurait eu des conséquences sur le plan politique, bien sûr, mais aussi sportif. Car s'ils ne semblaient destinés qu'à jouer les figurants dans un groupe très relevé, les Iraniens sont malgré tout les meilleurs représentants de la zone Asie. Dernière équipe qualifiée, l'Iran a réalisé un bon premier match contre l'équipe éponyme de Yougoslavie, ne concédant qu'un but sur coup franc 1-0. Elle a ensuite remporté brillamment son deuxième match aux États-Unis 2-1, signant ainsi sa première victoire dans une phase finale de Coupe du monde, sa deuxième en vingt

ans. Grâce à ce bon parcours l'Iran peut encore espérer qualifier pour les huitièmes finale en réalisant un exploit contre l'Allemagne, ce si Mission pratiquement impossible face aux champions d'Europe en titre. Mais les Iraniens savent qu'ils pourront compter sur le soutien de nombreux supporters français et iraniens. De plus, ils valaient aborder cette rencontre dans des conditions beaucoup plus détendues. L'Allemagne, en cas de victoire, ils deviendront les héritiers du football mondial. S'ils perdent, ils partiront de toute façon à la tête haute, après avoir battu presque tous leurs « ennemis politiques ». ■

Notre correspondant à Paris Olivier B.



C'est la vie

L'agenda français d'Amman

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à la réalisatrice Agnès Varda. Sans toi ni loi, film de 1985 en couleur, sous-titré en arabe avec Sandrine Bonnaire. Une jeune fille est retrouvée morte dans un fossé. On reconstruit son itinéraire à travers des témoignages. Lundi 29 juin au Centre culturel français à 18h30 et 20h30. Renseignements au CCF au 4636445 ou 4637009.



Droit d'expression

Les internautes plus libres que les autres ?

Communiquer directement avec le gouvernement ou les services secrets, c'est possible, grâce à Nets, l'un des fournisseurs d'accès locaux à internet, qui propose des forums de discussion. Y peut-on tout dire ? Pas vraiment mais la plupart des usagers s'y sentent tout de même plus libres qu'ailleurs.

«Questionnez le gouvernement»

«Une meilleure Jordanie», les appels à débattre ne manquent pas sur Nets. Et si les réponses des pouvoirs publics sont loin d'être toujours satisfaisantes, ces groupes de discussions offrent une des rares occasions de s'exprimer librement. Grâce au réseau des réseaux, les internautes jordaniens seraient-ils donc en ce royaume les vrais détenteurs de la liberté d'expression, alors que la presse écrite est aujourd'hui sous la guillotine d'une nouvelle loi de la presse draconienne ? Samer Jabari, l'un des habitués du réseau qui apprécie cet espace nouveau de liberté : «On y est sans doute plus libre et moins contrôlé qu'à la télé ou à la radio. Ici, on est son propre éditeur. On transmet ses idées directement, sans intermédiaires qui décident si le contenu convient ou pas». Et le jeune homme de citer en exemple les manifestations d'Amman pendant la crise irakienne : «On m'a laissé présenter mon expérience personnelle dans ces événements. Cela a déclenché une discussion féroce avec les membres du gouvernement, le manager de la télé et d'autres Jordaniens. C'était génial. On s'attaquait à des points délicats».

Une discussion féroce

Si l'auto-censure s'impose encore (pas de débats sur la religion ou l'unité nationale), certaines tabous tombent effrontément à travers le réseau. Il y a peu de temps, un débat sur le péso de temps a été lancé. Plus effronté encore, une abonnée a défilé la gent masculine en affirmant que les femmes, pat leurs charmes, savaient



Internet à l'université : une fenêtre ouverte sur le monde.

contrôler les hommes. Une provocation qui a jeté le trouble dans la communauté encore réservée de Nets. Mais c'était dit. «Nulle part ailleurs, on peut avoir une telle discussion sans subir les regards accusateurs de la société», affirme Samer Jabari, l'un des habitués du réseau qui apprécie cet espace nouveau de liberté : «On y est sans doute plus libre et moins contrôlé qu'à la télé ou à la radio. Ici, on est son propre éditeur. On transmet ses idées directement, sans intermédiaires qui décident si le contenu convient ou pas». Et le jeune homme de citer en exemple les manifestations d'Amman pendant la crise irakienne : «On m'a laissé présenter mon expérience personnelle dans ces événements. Cela a déclenché une discussion féroce avec les membres du gouvernement, le manager de la télé et d'autres Jordaniens. C'était génial. On s'attaquait à des points délicats».

personnes. Des gardes-fous qu'apprécie Fatima Hammogh, internaute assidue : «Je préfère qu'il y ait de la censure. Lorsque les débats deviennent immatures, j'oriente de participer car il ne s'agit plus d'idées objectives, c'est plutôt des attaques personnelles».

Portrait trop salé

Jawad Abbasi vit à Londres mais est resté fidèle à Nets, afin de rester en contact avec les actualités jordaniennes. Cet internaute s'exprime dans les forums, se montre sceptique à l'égard de la presse, lance quelques temps auparavant, et des huit réactions d'internautes qu'il avait suscitées. Il y a semblé-il encore les bons et les mauvais débats. ■

mis aux mêmes lois de la presse. Personnellement je ne dis que ce que je dirais dans un café ou dans un journal, pas plus. Pourtant les discussions proposées m'attirent souvent et j'essaie d'utiliser le sarcasme et l'ironie pour évoquer des questions politiques délicates. Jusqu'où peut-on aller dans l'humour ? Pas au-delà du Premier ministre, en tout cas, et parfois même moins loin : un portrait un peu trop salé des membres du gouvernement a valu à l'un des abonnés la fermeture autoritaire, mais légale, de son «compte». Dans le contrat Nets précise en effet qu'il «se réserve le droit de supprimer les messages affichés dans les conférences publiques qui violent les règles du réseau».

Au total, il reste difficile de dessiner les contours de la liberté d'expression sur le net jordanien. Il y a un an, les amendements de la loi sur la presse avaient suscité un débat ouvert et riche où participaient même des membres de la famille royale. Aujourd'hui, concernant l'actuel projet de loi, les internautes sont moins dispersés. Du moins, c'est l'impression que donne la liste des sujets débattus dans la rubrique «Questions au gouvernement». Un seul message évoque indirectement le problème : un des journalistes du Star y proteste contre la mise au placard de son appel à sauver la presse, lancé quelques temps auparavant, et des huit réactions d'internautes qu'il avait suscitées. Il y a semblé-il encore les bons et les mauvais débats. ■

Arine Maugo

Les Jordaniens derrière leur écran

Books@Café à fond la forme

Books@Café a la pêche pour la Coupe de monde. Le café cool et très mode chez les ados, les jeunes intellos et les accrocs d'internet a fait un effort particulier pour accueillir les dindos du foot.

On est toujours à Amman, mais on se sent comme dans un café de New York ou de Londres. La langue officielle est presque toujours l'anglais, accompagnée parfois de quelques mots arabes. Même les charmants serveurs et serveuses vous prennent la commande en anglais.

La clientèle ? Les jeunes gens des classes aisées, les excentriques et les originaux d'Amman. Tenue autorisée : tout ce qui est interdit dans les quartiers populaires de la capitale.

Sous les drapeaux bleu, blanc, rouge de la France, on arrive sur l'arrière-terrasse du café qui offre une vue magnifique du vieux Amman. Inaugurée pour la Coupe du monde, la terrasse est à trois niveaux. D'abord des coussins colorés encadrent une pièce d'eau où pissent quatre Mankenis en laissant apparaître au fond de l'eau les pièces de la chaise. Sur les paliers supérieurs, des chaises et des tables en bois s'embrassent. Certaines sont bleues des autres gravées par des clients nostalgiques ou hargneux.

Dans son ensemble, l'endroit ressemble à un joli jardin verdoyant. Sur les branches des arbres qui entourent ce petit paradis, sont accrochés des sacs en plastique remplis d'eau. «Pour chasser les moustiques», explique Tony, notre adorable serveur de ce soir. Parfait-il qu'à voir leur tronche déformée par les reflets du sac-miroir, l'insecte prend ses ailes à son cou en oubliant sa soif de sang. Une recette de grand-mère qui fonctionne aussi bien sinon mieux que toutes nos inventions sophistiquées.

Bon ! Et le match dans tout ça. Pas terrible. Une rencontre qui souffre le chaud, le froid, et le froid, l'autisme. Dans les gradins, l'ambiance est relaxe. Les deux équipes s'embrassent pas vraiment les fesses, mais on regarde quand même pour être à la page du dernier grand événement du siècle. Le principal, c'est de savoir s'il y a un centre ou un porteur, quelques idées s'échangent du lot. Short et

tee-shirt court, les pieds nus, une fille décontractée est assise avec ses potes et fume une cigarette en suivant le match sur les deux grands écrans. Un jeune homme, style intellectuel en jean avec barbe et cheveux longs tenus par un catogan, semble complètement absorbé par la rencontre. On remarque aussi une hippie en jean rouge et tee-shirt foncé, la boule presque à zéro. Trois allures, trois personnages typiques de la faune footballistique du Books@.

Jusqu'à 500 fans

Ca entre et ça sort en permanence. Quelques-uns s'arrêtent devant les écrans en espérant que le score change. La décontractée est plus détreinée que jamais et tape la converse avec les copains de passage devant sa table. L'intellectuel, a contrario, est toujours aussi concentré sur la télé, comme s'il était en train d'écrire un poème d'amour ou composer un concerto. Quant à la hippie, elle traverse une phase de déchirement : tenir compagnie à son petit ami ou suivre absolument un match pas très excitant. Tout se termine par un nul qui ne fait ni chaud ni froid. Pas de réaction dans un café qui continue sa vie. La décontractée quitte sa place en laissant ses amis derrière elle. L'intellectuel a toujours les yeux rivés sur l'écran pour ne pas rater une miette de la si-com crachée juste après le match. La hippie, les pieds toujours sur sa chaise, a définitivement choisi le camp de l'amitié partagée.

Ceux qui restent attendent le match suivant, en nocturne. Ils savent que, la nuit aidant, il y aura plus d'ambiance. Selon le manager du café, près de 500 personnes seraient ainsi venues admirer les poussettes brésiliennes et marocaines. Dimanche dernier pour le match des ennemis politiques États-Unis-Iran, l'assistance était paradoxalement moins fournie mais sans aucun doute beaucoup plus homogène. Victoire de l'Iran, clients satisfaits : la Coupe du monde fait rêver les cafetiers. ■

Samia Abu Sharar

Retrouvez chaque semaine la rubrique de Samia Abu Sharar pendant toute la durée du Mondial.

La morale d'une fille de petite vertu

La Dame aux camélias, un roman d'Alexandre Dumas écrit en 1848. En prêt au Centre culturel français.

Alexandre Dumas est pétri d'indulgence. Ce fils d'un autre Alexandre Dumas, auteur des fameux Trois mousquetaires, est le défenseur des pauvres créatures. Dans La Dame aux camélias, il vient à la rescousse des courtisanes, de ces filles de «mauvaise vie».

Avant toute chose, c'est un roman facile à lire. Pas besoin de dictionnaire à côté de soi pour décrypter cet ouvrage autobiographique. A 18 ans, Alexandre Dumas fils est en effet amoureux. Il devient l'ami de cœur d'une de ces courtisanes méprisées par le monde hypocrite du siècle dernier. Leur relation ne dure pas. Alexandre Dumas écrit à sa belle une lettre de rupture. Peu de temps après, il apprend qu'elle a succombé à la tuberculose. Son histoire pathétique le bouleverse et lui inspire le personnage de Marguerite Gautier, héroïne de La Dame aux camélias.

Baiser-symbole

Une fille comme les autres, cette Marguerite, une fille de la campagne qui va à la ville commencent une vie de petite vertu. Jusqu'au jour où elle tombe amoureuse d'un de ses clients. Elle se met alors à rêver, s'imaginer bonne épouse et mère des enfants d'Armand Duval. Mais elle a gardé des principes aussi. Dans une société du qu'en-dira-t-on, la réputation de la sœur d'Armand est en jeu. Le père Duval craint de ne plus pouvoir marier sa fille si l'on apprend la liaison honteuse de son fils. La société de l'époque ne pardonne pas le passé des femmes faciles. Marguerite le sait. Elle accepte donc le sacrifice de son amour en échange du baiser affectueux, sur le front, du père d'Armand, venu la trouver pour lui demander de ne plus revoir son fils. Le baiser-symbole d'un amour sincère tant espéré mais qui se perd. Marguerite a fait le choix d'une vie qui use la santé et le moral. Elle doit en subir les conséquences, jusqu'à cette fin tragique, punition divine qui ponctue le mépris social, la punition des hommes.

Faut-il la condamner pour autant ? Le lecteur est plutôt enclin à la pitié. Alexandre Dumas a voulu du respect pour cette belle fleur, ce camélia, et faire oublier ce qu'elle



Maria Callas dans la Traviata, l'opéra de Verdi. Une des plus célèbres adaptations du roman d'Alexandre Dumas.

Nasrine A. Sheikh

Une femme au-dessus des doutes

Sept mois après avoir perdu son siège circassien lors du dernier scrutin législatif, Toujane Fayçal la forte tête reste persuadée qu'elle a encore un rôle à jouer sur la scène politique du pays.

«Savez-vous où habite Toujane Fayçal ?». Question incongrue mais on est dans le quartier. D'ailleurs l'épicière du coin interrogé n'est pas tellement surprise. Étant donné la célébrité de la personne recherchée : «Oui dans ce bâtiment. Mais faites attention ! On ne sait pas ce qui peut arriver dans la maison de cette femme !». Le type en disant cela ne plaisante pas. Dans sa voix, on perçoit un curieux mélange d'inquiétude et de haine. Toujane Fayçal ferait-elle peur aux hommes ? Cette femme a pourtant une apparence tranquille, presque décontractée lorsqu'elle nous ouvre elle-même la porte de son appartement. Jupe longue et chemisier classique, elle n'a pourtant rien d'une ogresse et sans formalité elle commence à parler d'une voix sans entraves : «Mes parents circassiens étaient très libéraux à la maison. Il n'y avait pas de différence entre ma sœur et moi et mes deux frères. Ils n'étaient pas privilégiés. Nous avions les mêmes droits». A l'époque, elle n'avait déjà pas la langue dans sa poche et posait des questions sur tout. Un particularisme qu'elle a continué de cultiver à l'adolescence : «Quand j'avais 14 ans, se souvient-elle, je n'étais pas comme les autres filles de mon âge : coquette et vaniteuse. L'apparence physique avait peu d'importance à mes yeux. Je ne m'intéressais pas aux garçons, je les trouvais sois. Après avoir lu les œuvres de grands écrivains, leurs conversations me semblaient banales». Depuis, cette indépendante forcée n'a cessé de tirer à boulets rouges sur la gent masculine. Après ses études en littérature anglaise, elle commence sa carrière comme journaliste et productrice de magazines à la télévision nationale. L'une de ses émissions est intitulée «Affaires de femmes». Toujane Fayçal y parle de tout et surtout de tabous : la situation des personnes âgées, la sécurité so-

ciale, la pauvreté, l'injustice, l'inégalité des sexes... Elle impose son style rentre-dedans jusqu'en mai 99 où elle abandonne les plateaux de télé après qu'on lui a interdit d'enregistrer une émission sur la polygamie. «Avec la télé, j'ai commencé à ouvrir les yeux, à voir l'injustice, la corruption, la discrimination entre les hommes et les femmes. Ces émissions m'ont permis d'avoir un contact direct avec les gens et de constater la réalité des problèmes sociaux en Jordanie, que j'ignorais jusqu'alors».

Accusée d'apostasie

C'est décidé. A côté de son combat contre les hommes - plus que pour les femmes d'ailleurs -, elle s'engage dans la bataille politique. En septembre 1999, un article publié dans le quotidien Al-Rai provoque la fureur de certains islamistes qui prennent son titre «Elle nous maudissent et nous élisent» pour une provocation. Le contenu est du même tonneau : la candidate y défend le droit des femmes aux libertés individuelles, au divorce et à l'égalité du travail en piochant dans le Coran pour étayer sa démonstration. Hrram ! C'est le premier coup d'éclat d'une femme en campagne. «Je me considère comme une bonne musulmane, se défend la «coupable», mais je ne peux pas accepter que des gens qui se disent cheikh interprètent les choses dans le sens qui les arrange». Un mois plus tard, deux sympathisants islamistes l'accusent d'apostasie et d'athéisme et demandent son divorce, que ses trois enfants lui soient enlevés, la confiscation de tous ses droits et l'immunité pour quiconque répondra son sang ! Toujane Fayçal reçoit alors le soutien de cinq cents personnalités, des professeurs d'université, des journalistes, des associations de femmes. Même le roi Hussein fait une promesse de vigilance pour répondre à la pétition des



«Quand j'avais 14 ans, je n'étais pas comme les autres filles de mon âge : coquette et vaniteuse». Toujane Fayçal.

partisans de la Circassienne. L'affaire se termine devant les tribunaux en sa faveur.

Trois ans et demi plus tard, elle enfonce le clou. Pour le scrutin législatif de 1993, la belle Toujane, la passionaria du petit écran, est sans doute la plus connue parmi les douze femmes candidates. Elle devient la première femme à entrer dans la Chambre des députés. Ensuite c'est une histoire connue. Toujane la députée n'a pas moins la langue dans sa poche qu'à dix ans. Elle se charge de remuer un aéropage plus souvent enclin à l'immobilisme. Peut-être en fait elle trop ? «Elle est très intelligente mais

aussi très obstinée. Toujane n'a pas le sens de la diplomatie», explique une autre femme-maitresse, l'avocate Asma Khader. En 1997, elle perd son siège de la cinquième circonscription d'Amman. Le soir du scrutin, les appariteurs la voient débouler dans chacun des bureaux de dépouillement et noter fébrilement sur un bout de papier ses derniers résultats. De cette nuit blanche, Toujane sort épuisée mais persuadée qu'elle a été la victime d'une fraude généralisée. «J'ai les preuves», clame-t-elle encore aujourd'hui.

Sept mois après son échec, sa carrière politique n'a tou-

jours pas rebondi. Sans s'inquiéter, Toujane Fayçal consacre son nouveau temps libre à s'occuper de ses enfants, à l'élaboration d'un parti de tendance libérale et à écrire ses mémoires. Cette individualiste invétérée n'en a même pas profité pour travailler avec les associations de femmes car elle ne croit pas vraiment à l'efficacité de leur action.

A presque 50 ans, Toujane la mégalo attend le retour de son heure avec cette certitude : «Je suis capable de tout faire et de le faire bien». ■

Amineb Ishtay

The Star Stadium

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adasi

Ikebea blazes a path for Nigerian success

PARIS — Victor Ikebea, the man who shot Nigeria into the second round of the World Cup on Friday with his first goal for his country, described his 27th minute winner against Bulgaria as "a collective effort." Ikebea shot home from 10 meters after some skillful work from teammates. He told reporters: "Of course, I'm very happy to have scored but it is the team that deserves the credit. It was a tough game and it has been very tough all the way." France are possible second round opponents but Ikebea, who plays for Monaco, said: "France are a team we wish to avoid. They have scored seven goals after all; but if we have to we will play them. The victory is a great tribute to African football which has made such progress."



Star of the week

Mondial victims Saudi coach fired after early exit

MELUN-SENART, France — Saudi Arabia was the first team knocked out of the World Cup this year. So it made Carlos Alberto Parreira the first coach fired.

Parreira, who led his native Brazil to its fourth world title in 1994, was released by the Saudis after shutout losses to Denmark and France. "The Saudis were expecting a better result," Parreira said after a meeting in Paris with Saudi sports officials, who told him he was out. "As of now we are no longer with the Saudi team."

"I don't feel happy and I don't feel comfortable with the decision taken by the Saudi officials. At least they should have let us continue until the end of the World Cup, or at least give more time for the coach and players to get used to each other," he said.

Parreira, who left the MetroStars of MLS in the middle of a two-year deal to work for Saudi Arabia, was the eighth coach sacked by the Saudis in less than four years. He signed a one-year contract with the Saudi federation in December for a reported \$3 million.

Saudi Arabia lost its first two matches, 1-0 to Denmark and 4-0 to host France. The team played Wednesday against South Africa. Mohammed Al Khuraishi, a Saudi coach, directed the team at that match.

The decision to fire him was taken by the Saudi soccer federation after it met in Paris late Friday. Parreira said he had "very good relations with the Saudi players." Several were seen hugging him just before he was driven to the Paris hotel and was told of his release. But none were available to comment after he returned to the team hotel. Parreira said he



would weigh offers from three national teams and several clubs, but he didn't name any. The Brazilian said the reason given for his dismissal was their "very high expectations"; at least to repeat what they had done in the last World Cup, reaching the second round.

In 1994, Saudi Arabia became the only Arab team from Asia to reach the second round of the World Cup. The Saudi federation, headed by Prince Faisal bin Fahd, Saudi King Fahd's son, discussed the performance of the national team and its early exit from the finals in a six-hour meeting. A committee was also formed to investigate the poor showing of the players.

On the eve of the match against France, Prince Faisal confidently told reporters his country would win and move on to the second round. "The federation expresses its apology and sorrow for the loving, loyal sports fans in the kingdom and the Arab and Muslim world for failing to meet their

hopes and expectations," the Saudi Press agency quoted the federation as saying. Parreira led Kuwait in 1982 and the United Arab Emirates in 1990 to the World Cup finals. Saudi Arabia won the Asian Cup in 1988 under him.



Game of the week: US vs Iran Superpower? Not on soccer field

LYON, France—The Great Satan is going home in humiliation. Iran, which has been chanting "Death to America!" for nearly two decades, killed off the US soccer team from World Cup contention Sunday night, shocking the Americans 2-1 in a game sure to set off wild celebrations back in Tehran.

Hamid Esteki scored on a counterattack in the 40th minute, and Mehdi Mahdavi came through with a breakaway goal in the 53rd minute. The Americans spent almost the entire game showing they really are the gang who couldn't shoot straight, scoring only with four minutes left when Brian McBride put in a shot off defender Naim Sadavi. McBride hit the crossbar in the third minute, hit the post in the 15th and Claudio Reyna hit the post in the 33rd minute. "We went on the attack from the start," coach Steve Sampson said. "We crashed three shots on the posts."

It was more of the same in the second half. Reyna missed on a bicycle kick in front of the net after a header pass from McBride in the 57th minute. Prekil Radosavljevic was wide on an open header in the 63rd minute. David Regis hit the goalpost in the 68th minute and Frankie Hejduk sent a header right into goalkeeper Ahmad Abouzeid with the entire net to shoot for in the 79th. The United States, needing a victory following an opening 2-0 loss to Germany, swarmed all over Iran through much of the game, but could only come up with one late goal. "We have to use this match as a learning experience, so we can play at this level," Sampson said. "But I'm proud of our boys. They played like Americans, always on the attack, never giving up."

Before a loud, mostly pro-Iranian crowd of about 44,000 in Stade Gerland, the Americans were shown they have a long way to go before they are considered a world soccer power. Instead, they joined



Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea and Jamaica in being eliminated from this World Cup.

Iran's victory undoubtedly will set off months of soul-searching in the American soccer community and probably will lead to the departure of Sampson, the first American-born coach of the national team. After advancing to the second round as the host country in 1994, American soccer took a giant step backward this time. While the US team knew it would have a difficult time advancing from a first-round group that included European champion Germany, Yugoslavia and Iran, the Americans never anticipated they would fail so completely. Not even Sampson's all-out offensive lineup helped. Following the dismal loss to Germany, he changed five of his 11 starters in a move to add offense. While the Americans generated chances, they failed at opportunities for goals that most world-class players would have put away.

The game had obvious ramifications beyond the field because of the strained relationship between the United States and Iran. The nations broke off diplomatic relations

during the 1979-81 hostage crisis and President Clinton and other American officials saw this game as an opportunity for a thaw.

Before the game, the starting lineups of both teams broke tradition and posed for a joint picture instead of the usual separate team photos as requested by FIFA on Fair Play Day. Iranian starters gave their US counterparts white flowers and the Americans in turn gave them US Soccer Federation pennants. Iran presented US captain Thomas Dooley with a silver-colored plate. After the game, the teams exchanged jerseys, but the Iranians did not put on the American shirts.

The toot was set in the first five minutes, when the American player McBride hit the crossbar and then fell down when Cobi Jones gave him a soft pass with an open net. McBride, put in the lineup because he's good with headers, then clanked one off the crossbar.

By the time Reyna hit the post, the frustration was showing. Not believing the shot didn't go in, he raised both hands to the side of his head as a pained expression filled his face.

Mondial scoreboard

Mondial scoreboard

Group A
Brazil vs Scotland 2-1
Morocco vs Norway 1-1
Brazil vs Morocco 3-0
Brazil vs Norway 1-2
Morocco vs Scotland 3-0

Group B
Italy vs Chile 2-2
Cameroon vs Austria 1-1
Chile vs Austria 1-1
Italy vs Cameroon 3-0
Chile vs Cameroon 1-1
Italy vs Austria 2-1

Group C
Saudi Arabia vs Denmark 0-1
France vs South Africa 3-0
South Africa vs Denmark 1-1
Saudi Arabia vs France 0-4

South Africa vs Saudi Arabia
France vs Denmark

Group D
Paraguay vs Bulgaria 0-0
Nigeria vs Spain 3-2
Nigeria vs Bulgaria 1-0
Spain vs Paraguay 0-0

Group E
Mexico vs South Korea 3-1
Holland vs Belgium 0-0
Mexico vs Belgium 2-2
Holland vs South Korea 5-0

Group F
Yugoslavia vs Iran 1-0
Germany vs US 2-0
Germany vs Yugoslavia 2-2
US vs Iran 1-2

Group G
England vs Tunisia 2-0
Romania vs Colombia 1-0
England vs Romania
Tunisia vs Colombia

Group H
Argentina vs Japan 1-0
Croatia vs Jamaica 3-1
Argentina vs Jamaica 5-0
Croatia vs Japan 1-0

Top Scorer

With his three goals against Jamaica, Argentinean striker Gabriel Batistuta "Batigol" became the top scorer with four goals. French striker Henry scored three goals, as have Chilean striker Salas and Italian striker Vieri.

Fan of the week



The expulsion of Zidane France's favourite blue sees red

PARIS—Art has its price and if hosts France fail to get past the second round of the World Cup they may have paid a high cost indeed for the supreme display that was Zinedine Zidane's demolition of Saudi Arabia.

Pulling the strings of so many moves, Zidane strapped the hapless Saudis to the rack as France swept through Thursday's match 4-0 to book their second round place. But in one fateful moment, the same finely tuned strings of the instrument that is Zidane himself, snapped.

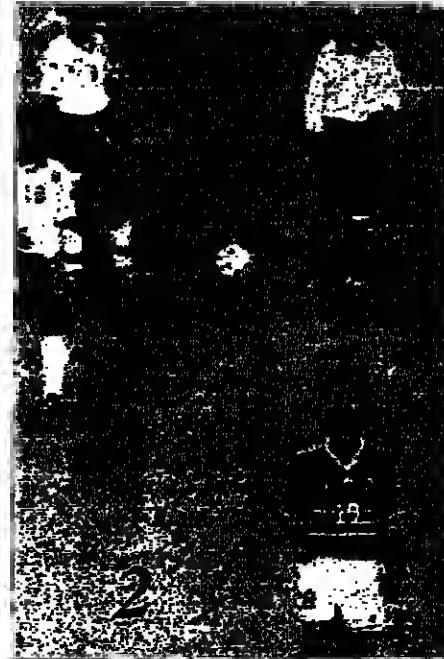
He trod on a Saudi player in retaliation and was sent off to face an almost certain two-match ban that would rule him out of France's first match in the knock-out phase. "I hope not. I hope not. I hope not," he muttered almost imploringly as he faced a barrage of questions on how it could have happened. "I did something I shouldn't have done but it wasn't nasty," he said with an air of quiet mortification that seemed curiously appropriate for a man whose cropped hair, soft speech and hunched, shuffling gait give him an almost monastic demeanor.

It was a peculiarly bittersweet moment on a night, just four days short of his 26th birthday, when the new Stade de France with its 80,000 notoriously blasé Parisians

took the national side to its heart for the first time.

"Allez les Bleus," they sang to hail France's biggest victory in years and the first time the side has ever won its first two matches at a World Cup. They burst into the Marseilleaise ton, and sent Mexican waves swirling round the stadium in both directions at once.

But first of all they sang "Zi-zou, Zi-zou," calling Zidane by his pet name. Even when he was sent off, they stood to hail the son of poor Algerian immigrants who best embodies the French public's eternal desire



deliver a killer-cross for Thierry Henry to score.

But the maestro, the true heir to Michel Platini's number 10 shirt who gets more freedom to unfurl the full range of his game than he does for his club Juventus, knows that his weakness is his temperament, not vindictive but fragile. "Things do affect me," he told the Sunday Times. "Perhaps too much in football." And if his skills are to grace the later stages of the cup, he will have to hope that his colleagues have not learned to depend on him too much.

Zidane will miss two matches, including his side's second round game, after being sent off against Saudi Arabia, the French team said. The team said they had been told the news by FIFA's disciplinary commission.

South Korean coach sacked

PARIS—South Korea coach Cha Bum-kun was fired after his team was thrashed 5-0 by the Netherlands and eliminated from the World Cup finals. His dismissal comes 24 hours after Carlos Alberto Parreira was fired by Saudi Arabia after his team also failed to make it past the first round.

Organizers said Cha, who played in the 1986 finals, had been informed on Sunday morning of the decision to sack him after the Dutch defeat. The Koreans, due to host the World Cup with Japan in 2002, have yet to win a game in 13 attempts during

five World Cups. Cha is temporarily succeeded by his deputy, Kim. His full name was not immediately available. Saturday's defeat was South Korea's heaviest since the 1954 finals. Cha, who played in the German Bundesliga and was one of Asia's most famous soccer players, took over as coach in January 1997.

Korea won both qualifying groups on its way to the finals in France and led Mexico before goal scorer Ha Seok-ju was sent off in the 30th minute, changing the game completely.

Enchantment of a 13th century poet

By Mary Rourke

JELALUDDIN RUMI deserves to be the envy of every poet. His latest book, "The Essential Rumi" (Harper San Francisco), sold 110,000 copies in three years, and he has a couple of dozen others that are doing well. None of it was his idea. He has been dead for more than 700 years.

He seemed to surface from nowhere in 1994, when Publishers Weekly announced that Rumi was the bestselling poet in America. Since then, the remote star continues to rise.

Born in 13th century Persia, raised Muslim in the mystical Sufi tradition, he founded a group of whirling dervishes who spin their way into a state of ecstasy, and wrote some of the most romantic love poetry of all time. To God. Before he died in 1273, he predicted that his works would cross all boundaries.

That was before anyone knew Coleman Barks. Barks, a Tennesseean with the voice of a blues singer and the build of a mountain man, teaches poetry at the University of Georgia and has published 14 books of his Rumi translations in 14 years, six of them by his own Maypop Press.

He doesn't read Persian, Rumi's language. Instead, he turns scholarly English translations into what he describes as American free verse, expansive as Walt Whitman, precise as Emily Dickinson. At poetry workshops, on tour with a jazz ensemble, in bookstores, on audio and videotape, Barks has been reciting Rumi, his way. Two summers ago, Bill Moyers vaulted Barks and his music to the big stage when he featured them in his PBS series on poetry, "Language of Life."

This spring, another whirlwind has Rumi stealing heat from Hollywood celebrities who read his verses on a compact disc: charging the air of a New York fashion show; haunting the libretto of a spare and ethereal opera. For the CD "Love Poems of Rumi" (Rasa Records), Barks, Goldie Hawn, Madonna and Rosa Parks—the Rosa Parks—read steamy, giddy, punch-drunk verses.

Because of your love I have lost my sobriety I am intoxicated

By the madness of love Deepak Chopra breathes Rumi's metaphors from the oasis—"I am your flower garden and your water too"—into Donna Karan's fall fashion show, now playing on video in her boutiques. Cloud-color satins, storm-color cashmeres, glimpses of shoulders and shinbones, and Rumi.

Allah be praised, but who can't understand Karan's point of view? "I don't think of Rumi's poetry as religious," says Karan's company president and spokeswoman, Patty Cohen. "It's all about love."

Barks says the verses go beyond limits, and he quotes his muse: "Love is the religion and the universe is the book."

But composer Philip Glass, who put Rumi's poems to music for his new score, "Masters of Grace," looks back to the artist's mission. "Rumi was absolutely writing to Allah," he says. "People who have seen the opera get that right away."

They understand divine, ordinary, and the mixing of the two."

The poet's thought that all of creation comes from God helps explain the poetry's mysterious power. "One quality of Rumi is to continually confound the reader with the object of the poem," says Glass.

At one time, Rumi was an imam, a Muslim prayer leader, as well as an expert in Islamic law. He had a teacher, Shams of Tabriz, who he once spent six uninterrupted months with. Whether it was a mystical friendship or something else is not certain. "It is in the Eastern tradition that a student and master bind together in spiritual unity," says Mohammad Haghi, a medical doctor with a doctorate in the history of science who lectures across the country. "Sufis use the language of human love to express a divine relationship. It is only in the past 15 years that the other question has even come up."

*I am your lover
Come to my side
I will open the
gate to your love.*

While romance and mystery surround his name, something else explains the furthest reaches of his fame.

Robert Phipps of Burbank, Calif., who's in his 50s, wrote his first poem after hearing his first Rumi verses in 1995. Now he has memorized them and is likely to recite one at any moment.

You dance inside my chest,
Where no one sees you
But sometimes I do, and that
Slight becomes this art.

Phipps tries describing Rumi's appeal: "This brilliant man had the same questions and difficulties we have." He lets Rumi finish the thought.

I have lived on the tip of insanity,
Wanting to know reasons,
Knocking on a door. It opens.

I've been knocking from the inside!

Fariba Enteshari, who emigrated from Iran as a teenager and later studied German language and culture at the University of Southern California, organizes Rumi study groups and seminars.

She works at Immaculate Heart College Center, but keeps up with Rumi groups that meet in the Los Angeles area. One group studies the "Mathnawi," a six-volume poem considered Rumi's masterpiece.

Enteshari is also part of a group led by Haghi, who comes to L.A. from Berkeley for meetings. All of the gatherings are in Persian, but Enteshari plans to branch out with a conference in English soon.

In modern societies we get cut off from our roots, not only as immigrants but as women, as minorities and others," Enteshari said. "Rumi tells us to look inside and find ourselves. He is the healer of our time."

When she began to study his work four years ago, she was happy to find a couple of collections of Rumi on the bookstore shelf. This spring, for a poetry reading at Borders in Westwood, Calif., 39 titles were in stock.

From the beginning of my life,
I have been looking for your face,
And today I have seen it.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Commercialisation of Chinese art

By Anthony Thorncroft

THE ULTIMATE in doorstops, a pair of 15th century gilt bronze figures of temple guardians, will enter a new phase of a long and complicated existence when they are offered for sale next week by Sotheby's in an auction of Chinese ceramics and art works.

The catalogue is shy about the origin of the guardians, each over a meter high, partly because Sotheby's Chinese specialist Henry Howard-Sneyd is not certain during which western attack they were looted. Their quality, and a partially damaged inscription, suggest the pair, expected to sell together for up to \$300,000, came from the Summer Palace in Beijing.

Was it the first palace, the Yuanmingyuan, devastated in 1860 by the British (under Lord Elgin, son of "Marbles" Elgin, with the help of Charles Gordon, later of Khartoum) in the Opium wars? Or was it in 1901 when the new palace, the Yihuan, was looted by the allied armies in retaliation for the Boxer Rebellion?

As a reward for putting down the rebellion, victorious troops were allowed to take palace treasures. Since these figures, part of a set of four, came to the west in 1906, it is probable they were still protecting the emperor into the 20th century. One of the four has disappeared; another was offered in a Hong Kong auction last year but failed to sell.

This is not the best of times to be dealing in Chinese works of art. China's economy has the snuffles; Hong Kong is running a slight temperature; while Indonesia, with its large (and wealthy) Chinese population is definitely sick. The extraordinary boom in Chinese art and antiques has ground to a halt.

There are other problems. Chinese works of art used to be collected in the main by scholarly connoisseurs, in the west. Now, with many more buyers, the market has become commercial.



High quality Quality Chinese antiques are increasingly returning East as more Chinese collectors enter the market.

To feed the growing demand for antiques, thousands of graves in China have been looted for the treasures traditionally buried with the wealthy to make the afterlife more bearable. The goods were then smuggled into Hong Kong, often with the collusion of Chinese officials. Suddenly there were hundreds of Tang horses, pottery figures, and archaic bronzes. Some were fakes, and works were freely available. Prices tumbled.

Finally, the Chinese government's attitude is uncertain. It deplored the wrecking of graves, but it liked the hard currency that flowed from official exports of antiques. It had a distinctly ambivalent attitude towards the finest creations of Imperial China: delicate Ming and Qing porcelain, hardly chimed with the trudge of the new China, and many fine examples were destroyed

during the Cultural Revolution. So far, the Chinese government has made no claims against treasures expropriated to the west. Beijing has used the sacking of the Summer Palace as evidence of the evil of capitalist barbarians, and some members of the Communist Youth League would swear allegiance to the country amid the ruins, but no demands for compensation have been made for the later Elgin's excesses.

China is also in a quandary about the greatest loss to its patrimony: the national collections, seized by Shek when he abandoned the mainland for Taiwan in the late 1940s. The Chinese government would love to recover these, but since it regards Taiwan as part of its territory, they cannot claim they have been taken out of the country.

There is also the legacy of the recent Chinese past.

Numerous shops in China sell antiques. They acquire their stock from government warehouses, which are either processing recently unearthed artefacts, or disposing of collections forcibly acquired during the Cultural Revolution. But times are changing rapidly in China and some warehouse directors are coming to auctions in Hong Kong, London, and New York to buy antiques that can be sold at a profit to the new breed of Chinese collector. China has entered the world market.

These developments complicate life for the Chinese specialists at Sotheby's and Christie's. Certain antiques are not worth offering: demand has withered away. Contemporary Chinese paintings, however, and furniture and the best jade still sell in Hong Kong or New York. But anything of doubtful quality must be rejected.

The auctioneers are also cautious on provenance. The last thing they want is to fall foul of the Chinese government. China, at least until the past few months, represented the future for the antiques trade. By tradition, the Chinese are keen and patriotic aesthetes. As they grew ever more prosperous, the art and antiques business would drift remorselessly to the east.

It was starting to happen and objects that had stagnated for years, such as Chinese stamps and coins, suddenly enjoyed an unexpected resurgence in price. Chinese paintings, ancient and modern, also fetched unprecedented prices. The potential in this business was too great to be jeopardised by the acceptance of obviously stolen objects, or antiques of great national importance.

Financial Times Syndication

BUSINESSMAN'S GUIDE

DIPLOMAT
Because You Deserve The Best
Tel: 5510427 / 8-9

LET YOUR NAME SOAR ABOVE AMMAN
We offer your Advertisement Graphic and Designs on the Electronic Sign Boards on the SAFE WAY Bldg. TSHANA Center, Jabal Amman & DOWNTOWN call 680367

Many villas and apartments for rent and sale, Furnished and unfurnished
For more information call:
Abdoun Real Estate
5920605/5920609/079-30007
Web site: www.abdoun.com.jo

RESTAURANT CHINA
The first & best Chinese Restaurant in Jordan
1st Circle, Jabal Amman, near Ahlyyah Girls School
Take away is available
Open daily 12:00-3:30p.m
7:00-Midnight
Tel 638968

The First Class Hotel in Amman that has a Kitchenette in every room ..!
DAROTEL
Amman Tel: 607193
P.O.Box 9403 Fax 602434
Telex 23888 Darot Jo
Ideal Residence for Expatriates and Businessmen

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PLACE PLEASE CALL THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Enjoy Reading The Star Every Thursday Morning

Home Delivery For Only JD 20 Annual Subscription

For more information please call 4652380 fax 4648298

Orbit
<http://worldcup.orbit.net>
Follow all 64 games live on ORBIT-ESPN's On The Ball interactive web site.
All the excitement.
All the games.
At your fingertips.
Orbit
Satellite Television and Radio Network
Your World Cup Network

THE STAR'S

COMPUTING & HIGH TECH

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us at 4648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.Jo with your news and views.

A call to Jordan's users to explore other aspects of the Internet:

Using 'Usenet'

By Sameh Al Humouri
Special to The Star

DAY BY day, more people in Jordan are getting hooked up to the Internet. This is definitely a healthy phenomena, but a common matter seems to be that people don't exploit all the Web's resources as they should.

Chating and browsing are not all there is to the Internet. The Internet offers massive facilities.

One such facility that few people know about, and even fewer use in Jordan, is Usenet, also commonly known as (Internet News). To simply put it, Usenet is a place where lots of people drop notes and information about topics of common interest, and are stored for others to read, and later on, respond to if necessary.

Every topic has its own newsgroup (also known as conferences, forums, and discussion groups) where people discuss their points of view, debate their beliefs, and share their knowledge. Usenet gives everyone on the Internet an equal chance to participate in a discussion; no one has priority or seniority over anyone else.

One of newsgroups greatest benefits, other than knowing how other people feel about something or getting all the updates, is that you can place any question whatsoever about the topic, and be almost sure that you'll get an answer.

Of all the people subscribed to that same newsgroup where you posted your question, there's bound to be someone who can help you, and most of

the time those who reply offer the right answer. You might as well just sit back and enjoy the thread of articles, as in the end, you'll get what you asked for.

Newsgroup topics range from cooking recipes to National Security. Whether you're the only 15-year old

or you just hate the sender, you can simply ignore it.

So, what does one need to have, in order to utilize Usenet? First of all, you need an Internet access account—which goes without saying.

Next, you'll need a newsreader, which is software designed to browse and retrieve newsgroups messages. The one that comes with Netscape Communicator is extremely user friendly.

Last but not least, you'll need to find a good News server. You can find lots of Public News servers, by looking up the term (open NNTP) on one of the search engines, which stands for (Network News Transfer Protocol), just be sure that the server you find allows posting, or you'll end up reading what other people write, without being able to have a say about it.

Of course, like in all other Internet resources, Usenet has its own set of unwritten rules and ethics, which is part of the more general Netiquette (networking etiquette), and you might as well consider taking a look at before using the net. One good way of grasping what it takes to be an active member in the Internet news community, is to lurk around (or read without posting), and to comprehend what other people write in a certain newsgroup before actually attempting to post anything there. This is mostly for your benefit, because if you dropped the wrong message at the wrong time to the wrong newsgroup, you'll probably be flamed by other users, faster than you

who likes opera music in your neighborhood, or just an ordinary guy who gets a kick out of discussing politics, chances are you'll find a newsgroup where you'll be able to blend in and fit beautifully, without being judged by the color of your skin, your sex, or even your age.

Unlike newspapers, you don't have to pay money to subscribe. Subscribing or unsubscribing to a newsgroup is always one click away and, contrary to e-mail, you don't have to retrieve every single message on the server (the machine where postings are stored), whether you like it or not. With newsgroups you can actually choose what to download, so if the subject of the message doesn't appeal to you,



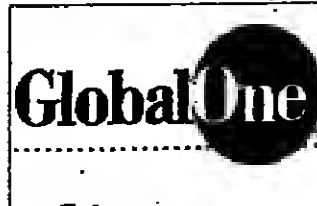
Pioneering on-line service to cover the full gamut of Media, community and E-commerce: Baladna, the site for Jordanians

ARABIA.ONLINE and Global One are to introduce a joint Online media, community and e-commerce service early August. Named *Baladna*, the service will give Jordanians the opportunity to utilize a comprehensive virtual world on the Internet through a pioneering project covering all aspects of life.

Initially aimed at Global One's subscriber base as a value-added service, *Baladna* is set to expand to as many Internet-savvy users in Jordan as possible since it covers the full gamut of media, community and e-commerce services. The result is a high-end media and community service that will keep users updated on news, entertainment, business, and much more.

Baladna will provide news coverage and hourly updates on current affairs in Jordan and the region. Through its Jordan Channel, *Baladna* will provide news as it happens without the usual delays of print media. A professional editorial staff backed by the know-how of the editorial department of Arabia.On.Line

will infuse the service with a wide diversity of political, business, culture, and technology news about Jordan and the Middle East.



The Hajj Message board will be maintained by Jordan's most famous caricaturist. An interactive channel will be open with the artist so that users can give feedback, ideas and access to an archive service of the famous caricatures that have been taking Jordan by storm.

The third aspect of the *Baladna* is the commerce page, another of *Baladna*'s unique features. *Baladna* will make shopping on the Internet a reality for the first time in the local Jordanian market.

In the initial stage, *Baladna*'s e-commerce will be linked to Arabia.On.Line's Shopping Channel, ArabiaShop, giving users a host of merchandise from a wide list that includes books, CDs, hardware and software and many more. A classifieds service would also be included to give users the interactive touch of the electronic community.

Arabia.On.Line and Global One will conduct a major study in this regard to further develop this pioneering service.

News update

Advanced Pentium II for notebooks

Intel has recently unveiled its latest Pentium II chip, specifically optimized for notebooks. The big news is that it offers a speed increase of around 35% over typical Pen-

tium MMX processors.

That is what is expected to replace the MMX chipset, which is currently the standard for notebook computers.

Dell was among the first to adopt the new processor, in its Latitude range of notebooks. Internet, is posting a frequently asked question, which could only waste other old-timers handwidth and time. For that specific reason, newsgroup moderators create documents over the net, called FAQ's, listing answers to all the (Frequently Asked Questions) in a certain discussion group. It's only logical to assume that those moderators didn't go through the trouble of creating such documents for nothing, so it's always a wise procedure to read the FAQ file before casting your questions in public, otherwise, you could be asking for a really nasty flame war.

Battling piracy with pricing

Microsoft Middle East are offering Arabic Microsoft Office at a lower price if bought in sets of five.

In fact, it's offered for half the price. The idea is to encourage legal software purchases in the region and to battle pirates at their own game.

Microsoft takes in Java

In an effort to capitalize on the success of Java, and to bring this dynamic new language into its stables, Microsoft have announced tools, libraries and more to ensure that it will become easier to write Java applications under Windows.

Called Visual Java 98, the new package will provide extensions to Windows. This should cause an escalation of battles between Microsoft and Sun, the creators of Java.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Dealers woes

EVERY ONCE in a while, we take a look at Jordan's computer market from the perspective of suppliers (hardware and software sellers), in order to spot trends and directions in the computer market. From the recent talks I have shared with some of Jordan's major computer distributors and retailers, the picture doesn't look too encouraging for them.

Apart from the huge price war in the local market, all sorts of other problems are appearing, all of which are related to a lack of professionalism and little cooperation among companies. A key problem is 'grey marketing' which refers to the practice of exporting a particular product from a regional wholesaler outside Jordan, although their is a local dealer for that product. The result is a loss of business for the local dealer, and poor service offered by the grey-marketer, simply because the product cannot be serviced properly.

Recently, there has been a major case of grey-marketing in Jordan, with certain suppliers importing Hewlett-Packard products, and scrambling for market share against the very strongly established local dealer—Scientific & Medical Supplies Co. Similarly, software distributors in Jordan face a 'grey-marketing' problem, which adds to their already existing worries, including software piracy among others.

Take the Microsoft authorized distributor in Jordan, Specialized Technical Services. They always face all sorts of problems with local computer resellers who purchase Microsoft Software from wholesalers in the Gulf, and market this software in Jordan.

Consumers may think that such practices are not a negative trend, because of the price drops that result from competition, but in the long run the result will be negative if our major computer companies become weaker. We will lose out on the required training, expertise and after sales services offered by authorized dealers.

To counter this trend, authorized retailers are pricing their hardware and software products very competitively, making it less appealing for grey-marketers. Also, through the appointment of several, instead of one, authorized retailer for the same brand, grey marketers are even squeezed further.

This is pretty much like the story of Apple Macintosh in Jordan, for which the authorized dealer is Ideal Systems Co. For some time, in the early nineties, grey-import Macs were all over the Jordanian market. However, nowadays, three years since the appointment of a second Apple authorized dealer in Jordan, the picture has changed. The Macintosh is very well serviced in the country, by authorized dealers and only a few cases of grey-marketing have appeared. Today, the 'several dealers policy' seems to be the dominant cause in Jordan. Both Special Systems Co. and Tansh Information Systems Group are the authorized distributors for Acer Computer. Also, Compaq is carried by Jordan Data Systems and IdealTech and so forth.

Aside from grey-marketing troubles, Jordan's computer distributors are plagued by all sorts of 'payment' problems by customers and they have been hit by a wave of cash flow problems experienced by even the largest corporations and information technology buyers in the country.

Naturally, the general economic conditions in Jordan affect local computer distributors, but they are beginning to really feel the heat. Some of the largest firms are complaining about slower business and collection problems (bad debts). This is a whole other topic in its own right.

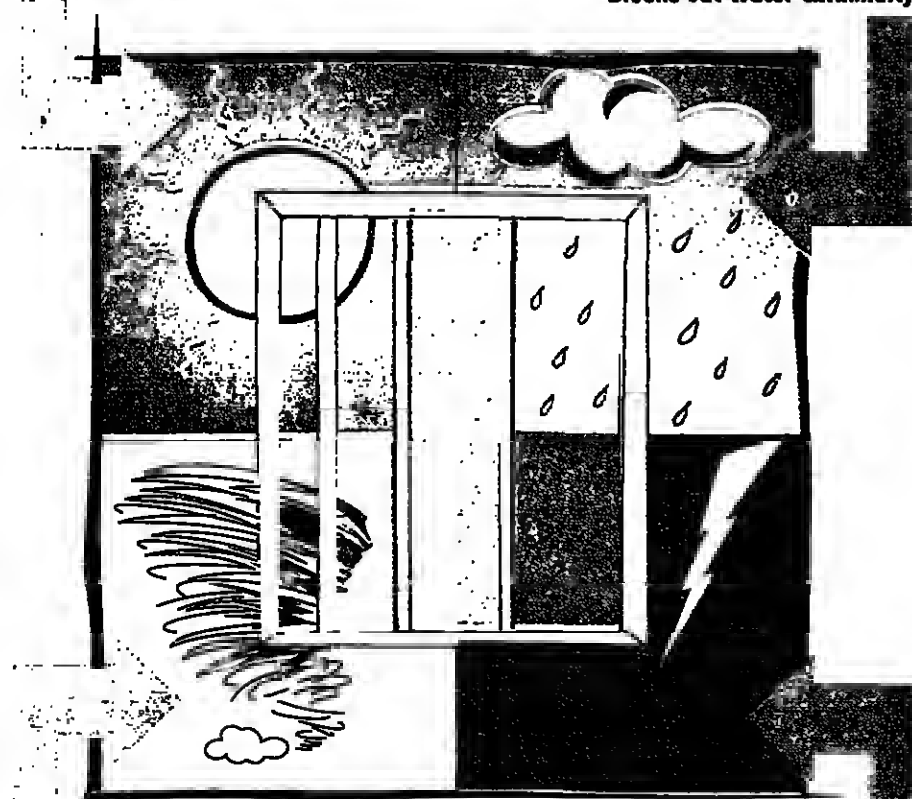
Major computer distributors in the country all agree on a couple of important points: First, there needs to be better coordination and cooperation among them to reduce price wars which harm all parties involved; and their needs to be some form of local licensing or certification, which will act as a barrier for unprofessional firms and individuals from entering the computer trade business. I can't say I agree with all the suggestions, but they are worth looking at very seriously; especially by the Jordan Computer Society (JCS).

AL MIMARI

U.P.V.C SLIDING WINDOWS & DOORS

Blocks out Heat

Blocks out Water & Humidity



Blocks out Dust

Blocks out Sound

ALMimari introduces windows, doors, partitions, shutters & false ceilings offering you:-

- Solutions to rust, seepage, noise & maintenance problems.
- Variable designs to fit any architecture.
- Low thermal conductivity.



20 years of experience

Mecca st.tel.5533516/5533515 fax 5520536

Jabal al Hussein tel.5666884/5661880 fax 5681171

Al Sarou tel.5359572 Irbid tel.277280

Factory tel.5341364

e-mail ahijazi@go.com.jo

25% down payment

JORDANIAN AL-BAID

Saving a sinking cathedral

By James F. Smith

MEXICO CITY—The majestic Metropolitan Cathedral was built as a symbol of the Spanish crown's domination over its new colonies in the Americas, showing the power of the Roman Catholic Church over pagan Aztec rituals.

The conquistadores built the cathedral right on top of the ruins of the pyramids they had systematically demolished after their conquest of Mexico in 1521. Yet ever since then, it has seemed as if the defeated Aztec warriors were fighting back—reaching up from their graves to drag the most glorious icon of the capital of New Spain back into the earth.

In this century alone, downtown Mexico City has sunk more than 25 feet as the water-starved ground has compressed; because some parts have sunk faster than others, one end of the cathedral settled nearly 8 feet deeper than the other.

As the hallowing Mexico City population devoured the capital's ground water throughout this century, the cathedral grew ever more lopsided, until it snapped in 1989 from the cumulative stresses, opening a dangerous crack across its spine. At that point, its gnarled nave and pillars were strapped with scaffolding and reinforcement beams.

Yet Mexican authorities never considered the prospect of falling to save the cathedral, which took 250 years to build and which art historian Manuel Toussaint described in 1944 as "the most notable monument of the colonial period in the Americas."

Today, the 435-year-old cathedral has nearly been righted, thanks to an ingenious rescue operation. Instead of needing last rites, the church will soon be healthy enough to throw away its structural supports and regain its original unadorned splendor.

And in the process of saving the 127,000-ton, 400-foot long cathedral, Mexican engineers have developed a methodology that offers hopes of rescue for crumpled buildings around the world, including the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Faced with budget constraints and the need to keep the cathedral functioning during the restoration, the team in charge of the project came up with a solution that was counter-intuitive and comparatively cheap: Rather than try to prop up the sinking front end, the engineers would remove subsoil from beneath the other end—and ever so carefully lower it back toward relative equilibrium.

"It is a process of observing and adjusting constantly," said architect Sergio Zaldivar, the project leader. "We are working against 400 years of deterioration."

The heart of the cathedral's structural problem is that different sections of the building are sinking at widely different rates. This bewildering range of settling rates led to dangerous buckling throughout the structure as well as cracking walls and roof vaults, causing the pillars to lean and creating waves in the floor that can make visitors dizzy.

Conquistador Hernan Cortes personally ordered that New Spain's first, humble cathedral be built to the center of the



To carry out the excavations, the engineering team dug 32 wells under the cathedral and the adjacent Sagrario church, built in the 1700s as a lateral extension of the cathedral. The concrete-lined wells are 10 feet in diameter and reach as far as 75 feet below ground. The wellheads are just below floor level and can be reached only through the eerie corridors of the cathedral's crypts.

At the bottom of each well, dozens of portholes give access to the muddy clay. Using hydraulic drivers, the crews push steel pipes horizontally deep into the clay. The pipes fill up with clay and then are slowly pulled back into the bottom of the well and hauled to the surface.

Zaldivar said his team is on the verge of declaring the project a success and stopping the excavations, at least for the next few years. The cost has been about \$2.5 million a year, which Zaldivar notes is "less than a highway overpass" and was far cheaper than any of the other options considered—such as installing 1,500 pilings up to 200 feet deep.

The Italian government, keenly interested for the potential application of the approach at Pisa, contributed a sophisticated monitoring system. Otherwise, the expertise and technology have all been Mexican.

The sinking of the city results from over-exploitation of the ground water in the Valley of Mexico, especially this century. Not only has the area's population grown to about 18 million, but the percentage of those people with access to running water has risen fast, hugely increasing consumption.

Seventy percent of the city's water comes from wells tapping the ground water, and the wells have lowered the water table perilously throughout the valley. The central city—a lake bed in the Aztec era—has subsided nearly 26 feet as the drier subsoil has compressed.

"In the Mexican mentality, the cathedral represents the Mother Church. It is the liturgical center, the seat of the archbishop," said the Rev. Ruben Avila, who has served here since 1985.

Surrounded by the 55 miles of scaffolding that shrouds the interior of the church, priests celebrate Mass several times a day. "The cathedral is now in intensive care, full of tubes and machinery, as if it were staying alive on a respirator," Avila said. "But, thank the Lord, the cathedral will soon be able to show its fine face once again."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service